



USAF COUNTERPROLIFERATION CENTER
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Times of Israel – Israel

‘Strike in Syria Sends a Message to Iran,’ says Former Intel Chief

At least some of the actors here take ‘red lines’ seriously, says Amos Yadlin, in a dig at US inaction regarding Assad; Netanyahu stresses imperative to ensure Israel’s security

By Gavriel Fiske

May 5, 2013

Sunday morning’s strike inside Syrian territory, which reportedly targeted advanced Iranian missiles headed for Hezbollah, was primarily a message for Iran, former IDF intelligence chief Amos Yadlin said on Sunday.

“Iran is testing Israel’s and the US’s determination to uphold ‘red lines.’ And what it is seeing in Syria is that at least some of the actors take red lines seriously,” said Yadlin.

The comment was an oblique criticism of the United States administration: President Barack Obama said last August that any use by President Bashar Assad of chemical weapons would cross a “red line.” Assad has used chemical weapons against rebel targets in recent weeks.

Israel has in the past said that it would not allow Hezbollah, the Lebanon-based Shiite terrorist group, to acquire advanced weaponry or chemical weapons via Syria, and that it would take action to prevent this from happening.

In a brief comment apparently related to the airstrike, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Sunday, “My father taught me that the greatest responsibility we bear is to ensure Israel’s security and to fortify its future.” The prime minister, speaking at a ceremony dedicating a Jerusalem road junction in memory of his father Benzion, did not elaborate.

The prime minister postponed his scheduled flight to China by two hours so he could attend a security cabinet meeting Sunday afternoon to discuss the escalating hostilities with Syria.

On Saturday, Ed Royce, a top US Congressman on a visit to Jerusalem, warned that if the US does not hold firm to the “red line” it set down against Syria using chemical weapons, it risks undermining the seriousness with which its positions are taken on thwarting Iran’s drive for a nuclear weapon. Royce (R-CA), the chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, told The Times of Israel that “Sending a conflicting message to the Syrian regime — which is a cat’s paw of Iran — could create a misunderstanding as to the steadfast nature of our intentions on Iran.”

Israel has a responsibility to see to it that Hezbollah does not grow stronger, MK Tzachi Hanegbi (Likud) said Sunday.

Hanegbi also said that Syria was unlikely to respond to an Israeli airstrike inside its territory. “A Syrian retaliation is always an option,” he conceded, “but apparently it was deemed to be a long shot.”

“We don’t want to see Hezbollah strengthened,” the veteran lawmaker said during an Army Radio interview. “The main thing we want is to make sure that with the chaos in Syria, Hezbollah won’t become more motivated to take action against us.”

“You can’t solve this problem entirely; the problem will be with us for many years,” he said of Hezbollah. “What Israel did in Syria, according to the foreign reports, was to act on its recent warnings.”

Both Yadlin and Hanegbi fell short of admitting Israel’s responsibility for the Sunday morning airstrike outside Damascus, which foreign media sources attributed to Israel and was said to target Iranian-made weapons headed for Hezbollah. It came at the heels of a similar strike inside Syria on Friday, also attributed to Israel.

Former defense minister Binyamin Ben Eliezer told Ynet News on Sunday that he didn’t know who was behind the attack, but Israel couldn’t risk passivity in the face of a threat to it populace.

“I see what kind of weapons we are talking about,” he said, “It definitely changes the balance of power. Israel can’t sit in silence.”



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An unnamed Israeli official told AFP that the target of Sunday's strike was a shipment of Iranian made Fateh-110 missiles, which are surface-to-surface missiles with a range of up to 300 kilometers (186 miles).

Syrian state-run news agency SANA said on Sunday that explosions went off at the Jamraya research center near Damascus, causing casualties and blackouts. "Initial reports point to these explosions being a result of Israeli missiles that targeted the research center in Jamraya," SANA said.

On Saturday, unnamed Israeli officials confirmed Israel Air Force planes had carried out a strike against Syrian targets early Friday. The New York Times reported that advanced missiles from Iran en route to Shiite terror group Hezbollah were destroyed in that attack.

On Sunday, a former IDF chief of staff, Kadima MK Shaul Mofaz, said he supported Israel's policy of preventing weapons from reaching Hezbollah.

"One thing is clear, Syria is falling apart before our eyes. Iran and Hezbollah are deeply involved in the Syrian civil war, and the transfer of weapons may be the regime's way of thanking Hezbollah for siding with it in its fight against rebel groups," Mofaz told Israel Radio.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/strike-in-syria-sends-a-message-to-iran-says-former-intel-chief/>

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The Star – Malaysia
Monday, May 06, 2013

Iran may be Limiting Growth in Sensitive Atom Stockpile - Diplomats

By Fredrik Dahl, Reuters

VIENNA (Reuters) - Iran appears to be pressing ahead in using some of its most sensitive nuclear material to make reactor fuel, diplomats said on Monday, a step that could help buy time for diplomacy between Tehran and world powers.

Iran's possession of medium-enriched uranium gas is closely watched in the West as Israel, which has threatened to attack its arch-foe if diplomacy fails to stop its nuclear drive, says it must not amass enough for one bomb if further processed.

Since Iran in 2010 began refining uranium to a fissile concentration of 20 percent - a relatively short technical step away from the level required for nuclear arms - it has produced more than the 240-250 kg which would be needed for one weapon.

But while the stockpile has expanded, Iran has still kept it below the Israeli "red line" by converting part of the uranium gas into oxide powder in order, Tehran says, to yield fuel for a medical research reactor in the Iranian capital.

Three diplomats said they believed Iran had continued this activity - thereby slowing the growth of the amount of 20 percent uranium gas - since the U.N. atomic agency issued its last report on Tehran's nuclear programme in February.

"Our impression is that it is fairly steady what they are doing," one Western official said. Another envoy said: "I think they are trying to demonstrate that their conversion is a significant amount, an amount that (Iran believes) should ease the concern of the international community."

If this is confirmed in the next report on Iran by the U.N. International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), expected in late May, the increase in the holding of 20 percent gas will be less than the production, which has amounted to about 15 kg per month.

In February, the stockpile stood at some 167 kg.

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WEST WANTS MORE

Critics say Iran is trying to achieve the ability to make atomic bombs. The Islamic Republic denies this, saying it needs nuclear power for energy generation and medical purposes.

But while the uranium conversion activity may postpone any decision by Israel on whether to strike Iranian nuclear sites, the diplomats made clear Tehran must do much more in order to allay Western suspicions about its atomic programme.

"Simply converting is not enough," one of them said.

Turning uranium gas into oxide powder in order to make fuel plates for the Tehran research reactor may be just a temporary positive development because the process could be reversible, Western experts say.

Iran could reconvert its entire inventory of 20 percent enriched oxide powder into gas "in a matter of a few weeks," said Mark Hibbs of the Carnegie Endowment think-tank.

"Reconversion is not hard," said Mark Fitzpatrick of the International Institute for Strategic Studies think-tank.

"Once the initial hiccups are overcome, the chemical process is straightforward."

But Iran's uranium oxide powder, like its other nuclear material, would be under IAEA safeguards and its inspectors would notice if it was being transformed back into gas form, unless it was done at a secret facility, experts say.

Were Iran to inform the IAEA that it intended to reconvert the material into gas form, "that step would immediately precipitate a crisis," Hibbs said.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said Iran was "continuing to get closer to the red line".

The six world powers involved in diplomacy with Iran want it to stop enriching uranium to 20 percent and suspend work at the underground Fordow site where most of this activity is pursued.

In their last meeting in early April, Iran refused the powers' demand. The two sides' chief negotiators will meet again on May 15 in Istanbul.

Editing by Mark Heinrich.

<http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2013/5/7/worldupdates/iran-may-be-limiting-growth-in-sensitive-atom-stockpile-diplomats&sec=Worldupdates>

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Jerusalem Post – Israel

UN Strongly Suspects Syrian Rebels Used Sarin Gas

UN investigator says suspicion is based on testimony taken from casualties of Syrian war in neighboring countries.

By Reuters

6 May 2013

GENEVA - UN human rights investigators have gathered testimony from casualties of Syria's civil war and medical staff indicating that rebel forces have used the nerve agent sarin, one of the lead investigators said on Sunday.

The United Nations independent commission of inquiry on Syria has not yet seen evidence of government forces having used chemical weapons, which are banned under international law, said commission member Carla Del Ponte.

"Our investigators have been in neighboring countries interviewing victims, doctors and field hospitals and, according to their report of last week which I have seen, there are strong, concrete suspicions but not yet incontrovertible proof of the use of sarin gas, from the way the victims were treated," Del Ponte said in an interview with Swiss-Italian television.



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"This was use on the part of the opposition, the rebels, not by the government authorities," she added, speaking in Italian.

Del Ponte, a former Swiss attorney-general who also served as prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, gave no details as to when or where sarin may have been used.

The Geneva-based inquiry into war crimes and other human rights violations is separate from an investigation of the alleged use of chemical weapons in Syria instigated by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, which has since stalled.

Syrian President Assad's government and the rebels accuse each another of carrying out three chemical weapon attacks, one near Aleppo and another near Damascus, both in March, and another in Homs in December.

The civil war began with anti-government protests in March 2011. The conflict has now claimed an estimated 70,000 lives and forced 1.2 million Syrian refugees to flee.

The United States has said it has "varying degrees of confidence" that sarin has been used by Syria's government on its people.

President Barack Obama last year declared that the use or deployment of chemical weapons by Assad would cross a "red line".

<http://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/UN-strongly-suspects-Syrian-rebels-used-sarin-gas-312178>

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The Kansas City Star

Obama on Syria: Chemical Attack still Just "Perceived"

Wednesday, May 08, 2013

By Lesley Clark and David Lightman, McClatchy Washington Bureau

President Barack Obama said Tuesday that it's still not clear enough that Syria crossed a chemical weapon red line, at least not clear enough to warrant U.S. action.

"Understandably there's a desire for easy answers," he said in a White House news conference.

Noting the wording of a reporter's question, he said, "the operative line is perceived. What I've said is we have evidence that there has been the use of chemical weapons inside of Syria but I don't make decisions based on perceived. I can't make international coalitions based on perceived."

Obama said he wants "the best analysis possible. I want to make sure we are acting deliberately."

Obama spoke during a joint news conference with South Korean President Park Geun-hye in which they both also vowed that their two nations will stand firmly together against threats by North Korea and are ready for diplomacy to ease any nuclear threat.

"If Pyongyang thought its recent threats would drive a wedge" between the U.S. and South Korea, Obama said, "today is further evidence North Korea has failed again."

Park agreed. "The president and I noted it is important to strengthen our deterrence" against threats to North Korea, she said.

But if North Korea is willing to become "a responsible member of the community of nations," Park said, South Korea is ready to help.

Obama insisted the U.S. is "fully prepared for any challenge to our security," and maintained "The days when North Korea could create a crisis and elicit concessions, those days are over. Our two nations are prepared to engage with North Korea diplomatically."

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But, he warned, "the burden is on Pyongyang" to make the talks meaningful. "So far we haven't seen actions on the part of North Korea that they're prepared to move in a different direction," Obama said..

Park, who became president in February, is in Washington for a series of high-level visits. In addition to her talks with Obama, she will address a joint session of Congress Wednesday.

Park has had a tumultuous few months in office. She became president shortly after North Korea heightened tensions on the Korean peninsula by conducting nuclear tests, claimed to be ending the 60-year-old truce with South Korea invalid and threatened the United States. North Korea appears to have backed off recently.

But in a joint declaration, Obama and Park declared, "We share the deep concern that North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missiles programs and its repeated provocations pose grave threats to the peace and stability of the Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asia. Both the United States and the Republic of Korea are determined to achieve the peaceful denuclearization of North Korea and are working with other Six-Party Talks partners and the international community to insist that North Korea adheres to its international obligations and commitments."

<http://www.kansascity.com/2013/05/07/4223212/obama-on-syria-chemical-attack.html>

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USA TODAY

Hezbollah Chief: Syria to Supply Strategic Weapons

By Barbara Surk, Associated Press (AP)

May 9, 2013

BEIRUT (AP) — Hezbollah chief Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah says Syria will supply his Lebanese militia with "game-changing weapons."

Nasrallah spoke Thursday, less than a week after Israeli officials said Israeli aircraft twice struck shipments of advanced weapons believed to be bound for Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Syria has been the main conduit for Iranian weapons to Hezbollah.

Earlier in the day, secretary of State John Kerry said the transfer of advanced missile defense systems from Russia to Syria would be a "destabilizing" factor for Israel's security.

Kerry said the U.S. has expressed concerns about what such defensive systems in Syria would mean for Israel's security. He wouldn't address what the missiles might mean for Syria's civil war.

He spoke to reporters in Rome after the Wall Street Journal reported that Russia was preparing to sell the weapons to President Bashar Assad's regime.

Israeli officials said they have asked Russia to cancel the imminent sale to the Assad regime of advanced ground-to-air missile systems.

Such weapons would enhance the Syrian government's defensive ability and make it even harder for the U.S. and other governments to consider even the possibility of trying to enforce a no-fly zone in the country or otherwise intervening militarily.

Russia rarely comments publicly on arms sales or transfers, and there has been no official word on the deal in Moscow.

Even before Syria's 2011 uprising, the Israelis warned about a sale of S-300 batteries — which can target manned planes, drones and incoming missiles. Moscow had held off on the deal under persistent U.S. and Israeli pressure.

The S-300 would be a state-of-the-art upgrade for Syria's aging Soviet-supplied defense system, which was easily circumvented in 2007 when Israeli jets bombed a suspected nuclear reactor site along the Euphrates River in northeastern Syria.



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And it would only add to reservations in the United States and other Western nations about a more forceful, military intervention to end the war. With the advanced aircraft interception technology, Syria would be able to present a far more robust defense than Moammar Gadhafi's Libya offered two years ago.

The Wall Street Journal put the deal at \$900 million for a package of four batteries, six launchers and 144 operational missiles. The missiles have a range of 125 miles, it reported, citing the Israeli-provided information, adding that the materiel would start arriving over the next three months.

Russia remains the Syrian government's most powerful international ally.

Kerry met earlier this week with President Vladimir Putin and Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in Moscow to find a path forward. Kerry and Lavrov announced afterward that they would convene an international conference in the coming weeks to try to bring representatives of the Assad regime and the opposition to the negotiating table.

The enhanced Russian military support, if confirmed, would fly in the face of American claims that Moscow is demonstrating a new cooperativeness.

Moscow, with China, has repeatedly foiled Washington on Syria, blocking three U.N. Security Council resolutions against the Assad regime. It's unclear how its recent calculus has changed, even as U.S. officials point to statements by Lavrov and other Russian officials showing less support for Assad's continued leadership.

Moscow has been the source of most of Syria's military hardware since Assad's father and predecessor, Hafez, courted the Kremlin decades ago.

It has provided Syria with 36 Pantsyr mobile surface-to-air missile systems and at least eight Buk-M2E mobile SAMs. The Pantsyrs are considered particularly effective against attacking aircraft and feature a combination of 30mm cannons paired with a radar and anti-aircraft missiles on the same vehicle.

And other obsolete systems have been upgraded, and Kerry's predecessor, Hillary Rodham Clinton, sparked controversy last year when she accused the Russians of preparing to deliver attack helicopters.

Russians officials have insisted to their American counterparts that they are only honoring old contracts that are nearing expiration.

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2013/05/09/israel-to-russia-dont-give-syria-s-300-missiles/2146543/>

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Focus Taiwan – Taiwan

China's Carrier Group Secretly Assembling: Reports

By Tsai Su-jung and Lilian Wu

May 4, 2013

Taipei, May 4 (CNA) Escort ships for China's first aircraft carrier, the Liaoning, are quietly assembling at Qingdao Harbor and the carrier battle group is suspected to be sailing out soon, a Hong Kong-based Chinese-language newspaper said Saturday.

Wen Wei Po said in its online version that the carrier battle group might comprise the Liaoning, four type 052C or 052D destroyers, two type 052B destroyers, two to four type 054A escort ships, one or two type 093 nuclear submarines and one supply ship.

The reports also said the aircraft carrier could carry 22 J-15 fighter planes, four to six Z-18 early warning planes and around 12 Ka-27 anti-submarine helicopters.

Judging from the formation, the carrier group could form three lines of anti-air defenses, the first being formed by the Z-18s and J-15s and the second by the Hongqi-9 surface-to-air missiles aboard the 052C/D anti-air destroyers.

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The third anti-air line will be formed by the SA-N-12 mid- and close-range anti-aircraft missiles aboard the 052B destroyers and Hongqi-16 mid-and close-range anti-aircraft missiles aboard the four 054A escort ships. The formation could handle 24 attacking targets simultaneously.

The reports said anti-submarine work is one of the group's other major missions, with the outer line of defense formed by its 093 nuclear submarines, and its middle line by the 052B destroyers and 054A escort ships.

The 054A escort ships are each equipped with eight anti-submarine missiles.

The J-15 fighters could be equipped with two anti-ship missiles each. As the Liaoning can mobilize 12 planes in one sortie, 24 anti-ship missiles could be fired in each sortie.

The report also touched on the group's anti-ship capacity.

Its 0522 destroyers are each equipped with eight Yingji-62 anti-ship missiles, which have a range of over 300 km.

In addition, the 052B and 054A ships are equipped with Yingji-83 missiles with a range of nearly 200 km. The flotilla has 64 Yingji-83 missiles.

The nearly 100 anti-ship missiles will form a daunting combat capacity.

The report said the Liaoning battle group's capacity could well overwhelm light carrier formations and non-carrier surface ship formations such as Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force.

If supported by shore-based large early warning planes, refueling planes and anti-submarine planes, it could even counter a single U.S. carrier battle group.

But the report also said that currently, the carrier group still suffers the drawbacks of insufficient capacity of its escort ships, insufficient capacity of its equipped weapons and low capacity of its supply ships.

<http://focustaiwan.tw/news/aall/201305040023.aspx>

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Yonhap News Agency – South Korea

May 8, 2013

Park Says S. Korea, U.S. Won't Tolerate N. Korean Provocations

By Chang Jae-soon

WASHINGTON, May 7 (Yonhap) -- South Korean President Park Geun-hye said Tuesday she and U.S. President Barack Obama agreed never to tolerate North Korean threats and provocations, stressing that such bad behavior will only deepen Pyongyang's own isolation.

Park made the remarks during a joint news conference after her first summit talks with Obama since taking office in February. The meeting came as the North has shown signs of softening its war rhetoric after threatening nuclear attacks against the South and the U.S. for weeks.

"The president and I reaffirmed that we will by no means tolerate North Korea's threats and provocations ... and that such actions would only deepen North Korea's isolation," Park said. "The president and I noted that it is important that we continue to strengthen our deterrence against North Korea's nuclear and conventional weapons threats."

Park said she wants to send a clear message to the North that it "will not be able to survive if it only clings to developing its nuclear weapons at the expense of its people's happiness. Concurrently pursuing nuclear arsenals and economic development can by no means succeed."

Still, Park said South Korea and other members of the international community are willing to provide assistance to the North if the communist nation chooses the path to becoming a responsible member of the community.



She said that Seoul and Washington will work jointly to encourage North Korea to make the right choice through multifaceted efforts, including the implementation of her "Korean Peninsula trust process."

Obama said South Korea and the United States are "as united as ever" over North Korea.

"If Pyongyang thought its recent threats would drive a wedge between South Korea and the United States or somehow garner the north international respect, today is further evidence that North Korea has failed again," Obama said.

"The United States and the Republic of Korea (South Korea) are as united as ever, and faced with new international sanctions, North Korea is more isolated than ever. In short, the days when North Korea could create a crisis and elicit concessions, those days are over."

The White House summit drew intense media and public attention as it could set the tone for relations between the two countries for years to come.

Park took over as South Korea's first female president as tensions were running high after the North successfully carried out a long-range rocket launch in December and conducted its third nuclear test earlier in February.

Since early March, Pyongyang dramatically ratcheted up the already-high tensions with near-daily threats of war and nuclear attacks on the South and the U.S. in anger over a new U.N. sanctions resolution for its nuclear test and over American-involved joint military exercises in the South.

But in recent weeks, Pyongyang has toned down its rhetoric and begun talking about the possibility of dialogue -- at least with the U.S. That fits the North's pattern of behavior of saber rattling before returning to negotiations for economic and other concessions.

Park and Obama agreed to break the "vicious cycle" of rewarding the North's bad behavior.

"We're not going to reward provocative behavior," Obama said. "But we remain open to the prospect of North Korea taking a peaceful path of denuclearization, abiding by international commitments, rejoining the international community and seeing a gradual progression in which both security and prosperity for the people of North Korea can be achieved."

Obama stressed, however, that such a brighter future is possible only when Pyongyang changes its behavior and there have been actions "on the part of the North Koreans that would indicate they're prepared to move in a different direction."

Park also pledged to make North Korea "pay" a price for provocations and bad behavior.

"If they engage in military provocation and harm the lives of our people and the safety of our people, then naturally, as president who gives the top priority to ensuring the safety of our people, it is something that we cannot just pass over," she said.

Park said she will "fully trust the judgment of our military" in case of North Korean attacks.

"So if our military makes a judgment which they feel is the right thing, that they should act accordingly. And this is the instruction that I had made," she said.

During Tuesday's summit, the two countries also adopted a joint declaration that commemorates the 60th anniversary of the alliance between the two countries and charts a new course for a relationship forged in blood during the 1950-53 Korean War.

The declaration reconfirmed the robust U.S. security commitment to South Korea's defense and calls for bolstering economic cooperation and working closely together with North Korea for peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula.



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"Building on the past sixty years of stability on the Korean Peninsula, we continue to strengthen and adapt our Alliance to serve as a linchpin of peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific and to meet the security challenges of the 21st century," the declaration said.

"The United States remains firmly committed to the defense of the Republic of Korea, including through extended deterrence and the full range of U.S. military capabilities, both conventional and nuclear," it said.

The declaration said that the two allies will continue to try to "bring North Korea into compliance with its international obligations and promote peace and prosperity on the Korean Peninsula, including through the trust-building process initiated by President Park."

The trust process is Park's trademark policy on North Korea.

It is a two-track approach of pressure and flexibility toward Pyongyang, under which Park has pledged strong retaliation against any provocations while at the same time calling for dialogue and exchanges to foster trust and reduce tensions.

How much Obama will embrace the approach has been a focus of attention. During Tuesday's press conference, Obama said the policy "is very compatible with my approach and the approach that we have been taking together for several years now."

Also discussed at the summit was Park's vision for peace in Northeast Asia.

Dubbed the "Northeast Asia peace and cooperation initiative," the plan calls for Asian nations to enhance cooperation, first on nonpolitical issues such as climate change and counterterrorism, before expanding the trust that was built through such cooperation to other areas.

It is a broader version of Park's "Korean Peninsula trust process."

Park and Obama also discussed ways to increase cooperation on such global issues as climate change, development and Middle Eastern issues.

Other issues on the table included ways to lay the groundwork for greater cooperation on creating future growth engines and ease the way for greater people-to-people and economic exchanges, such as increasing the quota of U.S. visas for South Korean professionals.

Park arrived in Washington on Monday from New York, where she met with South Korean-born U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. On Wednesday, she is scheduled to make a speech before a joint session of Congress.

On the way home, Park plans to make a stop in Los Angeles on Wednesday.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2013/05/08/82/0301000000AEN20130508001400315F.HTML>

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Times of India – India

China's Military Might on an Upswing, Pentagon Says

By Rajat Pandit, Tamil News Network (TNN)
May 8, 2013

NEW DELHI: From potent long-range missiles and new-generation nuclear submarines to expanding space, electronic and cyber warfare capabilities, China is pursuing "long-term comprehensive" military modernization designed to "fight and win short-duration, high-intensity regional military conflicts".

This is the assessment of Pentagon in its latest report on China's expansive military might, which was submitted to the US Congress on Monday. The report acknowledges that "preparing for potential conflict in the Taiwan Strait appears to be remain the principal focus and primary driver of China's military investment".

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But India, especially after the recent three-week military standoff with China on the eastern Ladakh heights, has to remain constantly on its guard. India is way behind in terms of military capabilities, and China's massive build-up of military infrastructure all along the 4,057-km Line of Actual Control (LAC) further accentuates its already stark combat superiority.

Pentagon says China has 79 major warships and 55 submarines, five of them nuclear-powered. It is also undertaking a robust programme to build "multiple" aircraft carriers, after inducting its first one Liaoning last September, to project its power further offshore. The new Jin-class nuclear submarines, being armed with the 7,400-km range JL-2 missiles, also give China its "first credible, long-range sea-based nuclear deterrent".

In sharp contrast, India has only about 30 major warships, an ageing fleet of 14 conventional submarines and one nuclear-powered submarine, INS Chakra, leased from Russia without any long-range missiles. India's first indigenous nuclear submarine, the 6,000-tonne INS Arihant, armed with the 750-km range K-15 ballistic missiles, however, is slated to begin sea trials soon. Only after it becomes operational by 2015 will New Delhi's long-awaited nuclear weapon triad be in place.

With projects underway to build J-31 advanced stealth fighters, counter-space weapons, long-range ballistic and cruise missiles, guided-missile destroyers and frigates, Pentagon says it will "enable the PLA to conduct a range of military operations in Asia well beyond Taiwan, in the South China Sea, western Pacific, and Indian Ocean."

The report also takes note of the ever-growing China-Pakistan nexus. "Pakistan remains China's primary customer for conventional weapons. China engages in both arms sales and defence industrial cooperation with Pakistan, including co-production of the JF-17 and F-7 fighters, F-22P frigates with helicopters, K-8 jet trainers, early warning and control aircraft, main-battle tanks, air-to-air missiles, anti-ship cruise missiles."

Cyber-warfare is another top-priority for China, with it being viewed as "unconventional warfare as well as preemption weapons". Pentagon directly accuses China of indulging in major online espionage and hacking of US networks to steal technology to fuel its military modernization. India, too, has faced incessant cyber attacks, with Chinese online espionage agents frequently breaking into sensitive Indian military and other computer networks.

China ----- * Annual defence budget: \$114 billion (declared budget but spends much more) * Large nuclear-capable missile arsenal. Road-mobile DF-31A missile can hit targets 11,200-km away, while the JL-2 submarine-launched missile has a 7,400-km range. * Armed Forces: 2.2 million troops * Submarines: 55 (at least 5 nuclear attack ones) * Major Warships: 75 (one aircraft carrier) * Fighter Jets: Over 1,700 * Main-Battle Tanks: Over 7,000

India ----- * Annual defence budget: \$39 billion * Limited nuclear-capable missile arsenal. Agni-I (700-km), Agni-II (2,500-km) and Agni-III (3,000-km) inducted. Agni-IV (3,500 km) and Agni-V (5,000-km) being tested. * Armed Forces: 1.3 million troops * Submarines: 15 (one nuclear-powered but without strategic missiles) * Major Warships: Over 30 (one aircraft carrier) * Fighter Jets: Over 550 * Main-Battle Tanks: Over 3,200

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Chinas-military-might-on-an-upswing-Pentagon-says/articleshow/19941805.cms>

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The Korea Herald – South Korea
May 9, 2013

Seoul Declines Joining U.S.-Led Missile Defense

The defense ministry on Thursday ruled out South Korea's participation in the American-led missile defense system, saying it will focus on developing its own program to defend itself from North Korea's missile threats.



Whether to join a U.S.-led missile defense system involving ground-based interceptors and the X-band radar has been a prickly issue in South Korea, as it could spur a regional arms race involving China and further contribute to mounting costs in the national missile program.

The issue has resurfaced after U.S. President Barack Obama on Tuesday said during a joint conference with South Korean President Park Geun-hye that the two countries agreed to jointly invest in missile defenses and shared capabilities against the threat of North Korea.

In response to local reports that Obama's remark may indicate ongoing discussions over Seoul's participation in the American-led missile shield, the South Korean defense ministry said the military has already been cooperating with U.S. forces on missile defense, but the scope is only limited to intelligence sharing.

"South Korea has its own missile defense system for uses against missiles in the terminal stage, which is best suited for countering growing North Korean missile threats," ministry spokesman Kim Min-seok said. "Under the current circumstances, we have cooperated with the U.S. missile defense system for intelligence sharing and are seeking ways to develop the cooperation."

Although Seoul is not opposed to the U.S. program, Kim said the two sides have been working together to monitor and trace North Korea's missiles without establishing additional installations.

"(South Korea and the U.S.) have cooperated with each other to trace North Korean missiles with available resources," Kim said, denying installation of advanced missiles and radars tied to the American system.

South Korea has gradually been building an independent, low-tier missile shield called the Korea Air and Missile Defense System (KAMD) since 2006 by acquiring Patriot missiles and long-range early warning radar.

The KAMD involves an early warning radar as well as ship-to-air and land-based missile defense systems, arming Seoul with the ability to track and shoot down the North's low-flying, short- and medium-range missiles, with help of U.S. early warning satellites.

Seoul has been pushing to bolster its defenses against North Korea, which is believed to have over 1,000 missiles with varying capabilities, but the mid-term plan has taken on new urgency after the communist country successfully fired off a long-range rocket last December.

Pyongyang claims the launch was aimed at sending a working satellite into space, but Seoul and Washington consider it to have been a covert test of its ballistic missile technology.

South Korea currently operates Patriot Advanced Capability (PAC-2) batteries, which can hit an incoming missile at an altitude of up to 30 kilometers.

In late April, the South Korean military approved the plan to upgrade the PAC-2 system to the PAC-3 version and buy additional rounds. PAC-3 interceptors provide back-up protection as the missile returns to earth.

The U.S. military has been operating a four-stage program that uses sea-based, as well as land-based ballistic-missile interceptors since 2009.

Several foreign navies are participating in sea-based ballistic missile defense jointly with U.S. forces, including Japan and Australia.

In response to Pyongyang's threat to strike the U.S. with its missile and nuclear weapons against South Korea-U.S. drills in April, the Pentagon stationed 14 missile interceptors in Alaska to protect the U.S. west coast from North Korea.

The Pentagon also positioned two Aegis guided-missile destroyers in the western Pacific and a Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missile defense system in Guam. (Yonhap News)

<http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20130509000874>

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The Detroit News
May 10, 2013

North Korea Nuke Arsenal seen as Matter of When, Not If

By Foster Klug, Associated Press (AP)

Seoul, South Korea — For 20 years, fears about North Korea's headlong pursuit of nuclear bombs have been watered down with smirking admonishments not to overestimate an impoverished dictatorship prone to bragging and tantrums.

Few are laughing now.

After three nuclear tests of apparently increasing power and a long-range rocket launch that puts it a big step closer to having a missile that can carry a nuclear warhead to American shores, many believe that in a matter of years — as little as five, maybe, though the timeframe is a point of debate — Pyongyang will have a very scary nuclear arsenal.

Though it's a view not embraced by everyone, one respected South Korean expert says North Korea could be working toward 80 to 100 nuclear-tipped missiles. Bruce Klingner, a former U.S. intelligence officer specializing in North Korea, provides a less dramatic but still bracing assessment: If the path is A to Z, with Z being nuclear missiles that can hit the U.S. mainland, North Korea is maybe at T.

Proof of the new seriousness with which Pyongyang's intentions are now seen can be found in the Obama administration's announcement in March that it will spend \$1 billion to add 14 interceptors to the U.S.-based missile defense system. It said it was responding to what it called faster-than-anticipated North Korean progress on nuclear weapons and missiles.

"Where in the past, there may have been some ambiguity about what North Korea was seeking to achieve, there is a clear recognition that they are pressing toward a nuclear capability with a potential longer-range delivery," Kurt Campbell, the top U.S. diplomat for Asia from 2009 until earlier this year, said at a forum last week in Seoul. "Such an approach represents a strategic, almost existential threat to the United States."

The sense of urgency is new. What hasn't changed is the fierce, seemingly paralyzing debate about how to discourage North Korea's development of nuclear weapons. Some call for unconditional talks. Others say it's time for tougher, Iran-style sanctions and for China to cut off aid to its ally.

Pyongyang emerged in a new light after it put a satellite into orbit on the tip of a long-range rocket in December — beating much richer Seoul to that goal. Then in February, it conducted a nuclear test that, while details remain unclear, appeared to be its most powerful yet. It followed those moves with a torrent of threats in March and April in response to U.N. sanctions and huge U.S.-South Korean military drills.

"It's quite understandable that people are spooked. The only mystery is why it's taken so long," Jeffrey Lewis, a nonproliferation specialist at the Monterey Institute of International Studies, wrote in a blog post in mid-April.

Analysts now put the North's arsenal at four to eight plutonium bombs. They also suspect it is making fuel for uranium bombs, but they don't know how much.

The suspected bombs aren't thought to be small enough to put on long-range missiles, but some analysts believe Pyongyang may be able to arm shorter-range missiles with warheads.

Pyongyang's weapons probably aren't meant to carry out nuclear threats, analysts say, but instead to protect against perceived outside hostility while extracting diplomatic and aid concessions. Pyongyang insists that it needs nuclear weapons to defend against a U.S. attack. Washington insists it has no such intention.

Here's how one prominent analyst sees the future of Pyongyang's atomic arsenal. North Korea's leaders have been closely studying their nuclear history, and Pakistan, which helped Pyongyang's nascent nuclear program and which

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built its own atomic arsenal outside international treaties, is probably an inspiration, said Hahm Chaibong, president of the conservative Asan Institute in Seoul.

With that model in mind, the goal then could be a "minimum operational nuclear capability" of 80 to 100 nuclear missiles, including some that could reach the United States, Hahm estimated. The weapons would be hidden around the country to prevent detection, in caves, tunnels, amid conventional missile stockpiles, in dense population centers and on mobile launchers, Hahm said in an interview. He speculated that such an effort could take five to 10 years.

One hundred warheads in five years is probably alarmist, Matthew Kroenig, a nuclear expert at Georgetown University, wrote in an email, but "it would be naive to assume that Pyongyang will keep a small and primitive arsenal forever. Rather, it is likely that they will rapidly move to expand their arsenal and means of delivery."

Many analysts believe it has taken so long to come to terms with North Korea's intentions because of a long history of chronic underestimation.

This may stem from the North's poverty — it has a GDP rivaling Senegal — or from the images of goose-stepping soldiers and leadership-worshipping masses that can seem to foreigners to be frozen in the amber of Cold War stereotype.

"It's not a pretend nuclear-strike capability," said John Delury, an analyst at Seoul's Yonsei University. "We're past that point where you can just laugh it off."

Some of North Korea's recent threats were widely dismissed, including vows of nuclear strikes on Washington and Seoul. But another announcement was more worrying: It promised to restart all nuclear fuel production, including a mothballed reactor that could eventually make a bomb's worth of plutonium annually. Estimates on how long it would take to restart plutonium facilities vary from three months to a year.

An even bigger fear is a uranium enrichment program unveiled in late 2010 that could provide a second, more easily concealed source of bomb fuel, quickly augmenting Pyongyang's arsenal, Klingner, the former U.S. intelligence official, said in an interview in Seoul.

"We've underestimated them," said Klingner, now an expert with the conservative Heritage Foundation think tank in Washington. "People made fun of their long-range missile until it didn't fail. There was sort of this, 'Why wasn't I informed there was a long-range missile threat?' Well, we've been warning you for 15 years."

North Korea has yet to prove it possesses an arsenal of flight-capable, nuclear-tipped missiles. But in a statement that still reverberates, then-U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates said in early 2011 that Pyongyang will have a limited ability to deliver a weapon to U.S. shores within five years using intercontinental ballistic missiles.

To Lewis, the Monterey Institute expert, the North's December rocket launch clearly showed what it can do. "If you think North Korea lacks the basic capabilities to build long-range missiles, guess again. A space launcher is not exactly the same thing, but it's most of the way there," he said.

What to do is as tough to determine now as it was when President Bill Clinton considered bombing a North Korean reactor in 1994, when worries over North Korea's nuclear ambitions and its refusal to admit U.N. inspectors sparked the first North Korean nuclear crisis. No strikes were ordered. Former President Jimmy Carter visited Pyongyang and diplomats later struck a deal, now defunct, to freeze Pyongyang's nuclear program in exchange for U.S. aid.

Campbell, the former U.S. diplomat, said mounting "serial provocations" from Pyongyang have "caused a quiet rethinking in a variety of capitals about just how difficult it is to construct any engagement strategy with North Korea."

For many, the key is China, which is Pyongyang's economic and diplomatic lifeline, providing nearly all of its fuel and most of its trade.

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A frustrated new Chinese leadership has recently displayed willingness to work with Washington to apply pressure on Pyongyang. But Beijing's primary goal is stability. A crisis could damage its economy; a collapse in Pyongyang could push refugees into China or leave a U.S.-friendly unified Korea on its borders.

Campbell said Washington has told Beijing "that if this process continues, we will be taking defensive and other steps in Northeast Asia that will not be in China's strategic interests."

There's also a push by U.S. lawmakers for strong unilateral steps similar to sanctions issued against Iran, and similar to what the Bush administration used against a Macau-based bank that held about \$25 million in North Korean funds. The Macau measure was seen as effective because it caused a ripple effect among other banks worried about being shut out of the international financial system because of dealings with Pyongyang. The measure, however, proved complicated to undo when nuclear negotiations with North Korea finally got back on track.

At the other end of the spectrum is dialogue. But both sides have preconditions. North Korea is interested in talking as one nuclear power to another with the United States. Washington rejects Pyongyang's claim to be a nuclear state and insists on total denuclearization as the basis for any dialogue — a condition that dooms talks before they begin, according to Delury.

It's still possible, Delury said, for Washington to sit down with the North and negotiate a partial nuclear freeze, laying the groundwork for an eventual rollback and ultimately elimination. He said that aggressive policy measures by Washington will "only justify faster movement" by North Korea "to strengthen all those capabilities."

<http://www.detroitnews.com/article/20130510/NATION/305100389/1361/North-Korea-nuke-arsenal-seen-as-matter-of-when--not-if>

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Defense News.com

Pakistan Employs China's Beidou Guidance System, but Access Not Guaranteed

May 7, 2013

By USMAN ANSARI

ISLAMABAD — Access to China's Beidou satellite guidance system for navigation and precision strike weaponry is welcomed by Pakistani analysts, but guaranteed availability of the Beidou signal cannot be assumed.

"Pakistan's armed forces cannot rely on US GPS because of its questionable availability during a conflict that has overtones of nuclear escalation," former Pakistan Air Force pilot Kaiser Tufail said.

"With Pakistani cruise missiles having satellite navigation as an option, it would actually be very naive to believe that US would abet in any such venture," he said.

The Beidou military signal will be more accurate than available commercial systems.

Mansoor Ahmed from Quaid-e-Azam University's Department of Defence and Strategic Studies, who specializes in Pakistan's national deterrent and delivery program, said the Beidou signal is vital for Pakistan's defense.

"Pakistan is likely to follow a two-pronged strategy aimed at providing redundancies in conflict situations for secure guidance of its cruise missiles," he said.

"This would call for reliance on Beidou as well as inertial guidance, the latter being used for indigenous cruise missiles like Babur, which can be used for counterforce precision strikes with or without conventional warheads," he added.

Pakistan's indigenous cruise missiles, the air-launched Hatf-VIII/Vengeance-VIII Ra'ad, and the surface or sub-surface-launched Hatf-VII Babur, use satellite guidance in addition to inertial navigation and terrain contour mapping.



Some Pakistani ballistic missiles, such as the Shaheen-II, are also claimed to have a satellite guidance option.

Despite its benefits, access to Beidou cannot be fully guaranteed.

Though Tufail believes “China would not outright withdraw [Beidou] at least in the relatively less dangerous early stages of a conflict. ... For Pakistan to depend on Chinese satellite guidance systems for weapons delivery [which could be nuclear too] is fraught with uncertainties driven by international concerns.

“Total reliance on the Chinese Beidou satellite positioning system in any conflict would, therefore, also have to be tempered with these stark realities,” he added.

Tufail said Beidou is important mainly with regards to conventional precision strike.

“The very large destruction hemisphere of a nuclear weapon, even a low yield one, mitigates any lack of delivery accuracy of a small order,” he said.

Ahmed, however, believes Beidou will have at least one important part to play regarding Pakistan’s nuclear deterrent.

“Beidou would be particularly effective for a naval Babur that is believed to be the platform for Pakistan’s second-strike capability,” he said.

Its value will mainly be through the accurate positioning of the launch submarine rather than the guidance of the missile itself, because inertial navigation should still be sufficient for a submarine-launched weapon as long as the submarine’s position is accurately determined.

Ahmed does not believe large numbers of conventionally armed variants of the Babur missile will be carried on Pakistani submarines.

For the Navy “Babur primarily fits in with a second strike platform carrying nuclear warheads” he said.

In the South Asian context, the use of precision guided munitions can be hampered, however.

The skies over Pakistan are often obscured by thick fog in winter and dust storms in summer, which complicate accurate weapons delivery.

Tufail, therefore, highlights Beidou as important for aircraft navigation and conventional weapons delivery. Though he thinks Pakistan “must retain options like laser guided weapons, notwithstanding their limitations in adverse weather conditions.

“In a 24-hour cycle, there are ample opportunities that can be exploited and these weapons can be useful backups,” he said.

China’s aid to Pakistan’s goes further than Beidou, however. While as Pakistan continues to develop its own precision-guided weaponry, only China can expeditiously deliver such such munitions in volume.

The Stockholm International Policy Research Institute (SIPRI) cites deliveries of the LS-3 and LS-6-500 satellite-guided glide bombs, and the LT-2 LGB in connection with the JF-17 Thunder fighter program as the latest examples.

SIPRI also confirms the acquisition of 50 Chinese CM-400AKG supersonic standoff missiles for the anti-shipping strike role under a 2010 deal. A variant of the missile is believed to also be satellite guided for precision strikes against land targets.

He is inclined to believe the CM-400AKG will remain a specialist anti-aircraft carrier weapon for the time being therefore.

<http://www.defensenews.com/article/20130507/DEFREG03/305070030/Pakistan-Employs-China-s-Beidou-Guidance-System-Access-Not-Guaranteed>

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The London Independent – U.K

Pakistan's Nuclear Weapons Mastermind AQ Khan Denies Advising North Korea and Iran

By Alistair Dawber
Friday, 10 May 2013

AQ Khan, the mastermind of Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme, has denied any involvement in similar programmes in North Korea and Iran, insisting that the two states have acquired any knowledge in the field from Western sources.

Speaking to Al Jazeera, Mr Khan, who has been described as a "serious proliferation risk" by the United States after being accused of passing on his knowledge to countries – like North Korea – which Washington regards as a rogue state, said: "I have nothing to do with it and Pakistan has nothing to do with it. All the western countries you see the nuclear technology Pakistan did not develop. Pakistan also acquired it from the western countries. They [North Korea] are also getting it from the western countries."

Pyongyang said in 2009 that it had joined the nuclear club, a claim that the US later said was probably true. Mr Khan was widely accused of helping Kim Jong-il's administration in acquiring the bomb. A leading nuclear physicist, Mr Khan was identified after reports suggested that Pakistan and North Korea had exchanged ideas on nuclear weapons in the early 1990s.

"Pakistan did not have any knowledge about missiles and Pakistan did not give anyone any information about missiles. We are a novice in this field," he said.

The rare interview with Mr Khan comes on the eve of Pakistan's general elections, for which Mr Khan, despite not standing himself, has formed a party. As well as denying any link to North Korea's nuclear weapons, he has also attacked the West over Iran's nuclear programme. Tehran insists that its atomic work is for peaceful means, but the West, and especially Israel, has said that the country is working towards producing a bomb.

"It's just propaganda, just propaganda western propaganda for public consumption," he said. "You know they were making the same propaganda about Iraq. And they couldn't find a trace of it. Not an iota of truth was in it. And even Collin Powell [the former US Secretary of State] had gone to the United Nations and was showing her pictures of chemical weapons laboratories and then he apologised."

Talks between Iran and the P5+1 – the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and Germany - have produced few results, while Israel has insisted that it will act to prevent Iran enriching sufficient uranium to produce a nuclear weapon. Mr Khan, however, insists that the claims are unfounded.

"If you attack a country on false accusations, you destroy the whole country, millions of people there and then you say oh it was false information. So this is the same thing. Everyone must know, Iran is a signatory to [Non-Proliferation Treaty]. [The] IAEA can send any inspectors anytime there to see anything, any facility. So there is no question of Iran getting anywhere near nuclear weapons production. So this is as simple as the daylight. It's just the propaganda for public consumption."

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/pakistans-nuclear-weapons-mastermind-aq-khan-denies-advising-north-korea-and-iran-8611270.html>

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Bangkok Post – Thailand

French M51 Ballistic Missile Self-Destructs in Failed Test

6 May 2013

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Agence France-Presse (AFP)

A French test of an M51 submarine-launched ballistic missile failed on Sunday as it self-destructed off the coast of Brittany, officials said.

"It was a failure, the reasons will be determined by an investigation," said Lieutenant Commander Lionel Delort, a spokesman for the Atlantic Naval Prefecture.

He said the missile "self-destructed during its first propulsion phase... for an unknown reason."

The missile was test fired, without a nuclear warhead, from the Vigilant -- a strategic nuclear submarine -- from the Bay of Audierne at 0730 GMT and had been due to go down in the isolated north Atlantic.

The defence ministry said in a statement that it "was destroyed shortly after launch, over the ocean," without providing further details.

Delort said the area had been cleared of vessels and aircraft prior to the launch and that debris from the missile -- which fell about 25 kilometres (15 miles) from the coast -- would be collected for analysis.

The M51, which has a range of 8,000 kilometres (5,000 miles), was put into operation in 2010 following five successful test launches.

Witnesses told AFP they heard a loud explosion and saw trails of smoke when the missile test failed.

"We saw flashes in the sky, I thought it was a plane exploding," Claude Jean, a resident of Cap Sizun on the northern end of the bay, told AFP.

France is estimated to have a stockpile of about 300 nuclear warheads, the majority of them designed for launching from its four Triomphant-class submarines. The remainder are designed for delivery from both land- and carrier-based aircraft.

<http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/world/348567/french-m51-ballistic-missile-self-destructs-in-failed-test>

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The London Daily Telegraph – U.K.

Lord Ashcroft Poll: Most Scots Back Nuclear Deterrent

More than half of Scots want Britain to retain a nuclear deterrent after Trident is decommissioned, according to an opinion poll published today that undermines a key plank of Alex Salmond's case for independence.

By Simon Johnson, Scottish Political Editor

10 May 2013

The survey found that 51 per cent of people north of the Border want Trident replaced with an "equally powerful" nuclear missile system or a cheaper, more limited version. In contrast, only 34 per cent want to "give up nuclear weapons completely".

More Scots (43 per cent) wanted the weapons system to continue being based at Faslane on the Clyde than said it should be moved south of the Border (39 per cent).

Even if Mr Salmond wins next year's independence referendum, 35 per cent said they would support the remainder of the UK continuing to base Trident and its successor in Scotland. Half were opposed.

The survey of 1,236 Scots was commissioned by Lord Ashcroft, the billionaire businessman and former Tory deputy chairman, who said he wanted to discover their real views about nuclear weapons.

The results fly in the face of polls previously published by the SNP and Scottish CND, which have suggested Scots are extremely hostile to nuclear weapons.

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Mr Salmond has made removing Trident a key part of his campaign for Scottish independence, even promising that a ban on nuclear weapons would be included in a new written constitution.

However, experts have warned this is incompatible with his recent commitment to join Nato, a nuclear alliance, and highlighted the risk to the 6,700 jobs at Faslane and neighbouring Coulport naval bases.

Lord Ashcroft said it was worth “looking twice” at a CND poll published in February that claimed 60 per cent of Scots are opposed to replacing Trident and only 14 per cent support the move.

The philanthropist said the question claimed the cost was £65 billion, a figure he said was three times the real figure because it also included 30 years of running costs.

However, the peer said the main problem was the question suggested that the Government “wanted to spend billions on new nukes just for the hell of it” and not because Trident was coming to the end of its working life.

“As we know from their attempt to rig the referendum question, the SNP has form on this sort of thing. Trying to show that people think what you want them to think is not the same thing as trying to find out what they really think,” he said.

The survey, which was conducted between April 29 and May 2, found 37 per cent of Scots support the UK having nuclear weapons and 48 per cent are opposed with 15 per cent undecided.

Despite this, 20 per cent said they would replace Trident with an equally powerful system and a further 31 per cent said a more limited nuclear deterrent should be retained.

The proportion who wanted to keep some form of nuclear deterrent increased to 54 per cent when the cost of replacing Trident, estimated at between £20 million and £25 million, was included in the question.

Only 39 per cent said Britain needs nuclear weapons at least as much as during the Cold War, with 22 per cent arguing they are not as necessary nowadays. A further 25 per cent said they are not required at all.

The Conservatives are committed to replacing Trident with another round-the-clock nuclear deterrent, while the Liberal Democrat ministers are examining cheaper options.

However, defence experts have questioned whether the missile system’s submarines could be moved south of the Border if Scotland votes for independence next year.

Arthur West, chair of Scottish CND, said the results contradicted his organisation’s polling and other public research, which he said showed a majority oppose nuclear weapons.

He said the Coalition’s austerity drive was increasing opposition to replacing Trident as people think the money would be better spent elsewhere.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/scotland/10047460/Lord-Ashcroft-poll-Most-Scots-back-nuclear-deterrent.html>

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Ottawa Citizen – Ottawa, Canada

Canada Pulls Plug on Funding Program to Retrain Ex-Soviet Scientists

By Stephanie Levitz, Canadian Press

May 7, 2013

OTTAWA - Canada is pulling out of two international programs aimed at ensuring ex-Soviet scientists don't end up working for terrorist groups.

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The programs, one in Moscow and the other in Ukraine, were set up in the early 1990s as a means to give weapons experts a place to work following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

But the work of both centres was given greater heft by G8 nations at the 2002 summit in Alberta, when the international body agreed to spend \$20 billion on a ten-year program to combat the spread of weapons of mass destruction.

One of the four key pillars of the so-called global partnership was scientist engagement, via the redirection of former weapons scientists.

Since then, Canada has contributed some \$60 million to International Science and Technology Center Moscow and the Science and Technology Center in Ukraine.

The need for the centres has passed, Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird said Tuesday.

"This is an organization which was established as the Cold War was ending to finance support in the former Soviet Union so that senior nuclear experts didn't go and work in other parts of the world," Baird said.

"Given we're some 25 years out from that, the program has largely been successful. Most of the people have retired."

But a former Canadian ambassador for disarmament questioned why, if that's the case, Canada appears to be unilaterally abandoning a program that G8 nations championed as recently as the 2011 summit in France.

At that meeting, the G8 agreed to continue funding the global partnership for another 10 years and maintained that the scientist engagement strategy should remain a priority.

"It is a little curious, if that was all restated so recently, that there's been a decision that this work is now complete and not requiring any further support," Paul Meyer said.

"You would have thought if there was to be a determination of that nature, that it would be done more collectively by the G8 and other states that have co-operated with the global partnership endeavour."

Canada is still funding the global partnership; last year, the government announced \$367 million over five years aimed at "building on past initiatives to enhance global weapons of mass destruction security."

"In effect we're actually spending substantially more than we did when that program was created," Baird said.

"We're just focusing it on where the new weapons of mass destruction are."

In the case of the Moscow centre, its future was placed in doubt two years ago when Russia announced its intention to withdraw.

Many took that as a sign of that program's eventual collapse, likely by 2015, which is the deadline Russia has placed for the conclusion of research programs taking place in its own country.

Canada's withdrawal is a logical step, suggested Elena Sokova, the executive director of the Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation.

"It's winding down," she said of the Moscow centre.

"And I think the purpose of the centre has been indeed served. I'm not suggesting there aren't problems to deal with but the instrument of the centre, the way it was established, the way it served needs, the idea is over. It's time to move on."

Meyer said that while the Moscow centre's demise have been hastened by Russia's withdrawal, there are still programs being undertaken by other countries and offers from them to play host to the facility headquarters.

Meanwhile, there have been no similar signals sent by the Ukrainian government about a desire to shutter the facility there.

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It has, however, been struggling with funding shortfalls, in part because two years ago Canada dramatically scaled back funding to its operations, catching it off guard.

That announcement came just after Canada volunteered to help the organization restructure, according to documents posted on the Ukraine centre's website.

The decision to stop funding the two centres is the latest exit Canada has made from a multilateral organization or treaty that the Conservative government has declared past its best-before-date.

They include a decision to withdraw from a United Nations convention that fights droughts in Africa and elsewhere.

The government said membership was costly and of little benefit to Canadians.

<http://www.ottawacitizen.com/news/Canada+pulls+plug+funding+program+retrain+exSoviet/8350429/story.html>

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Nature (International weekly journal of science)

U.S. Warheads to Get a Facelift

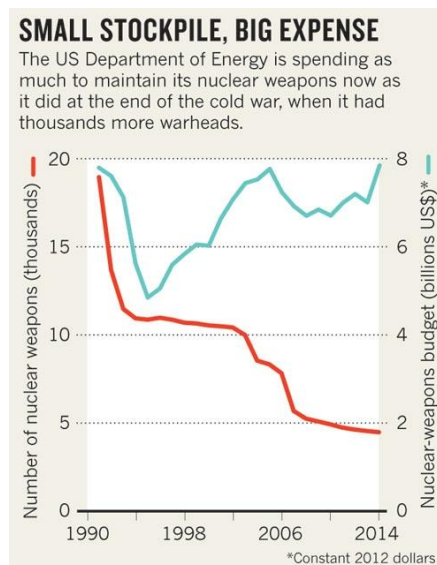
Obama boosts 'stockpile stewardship' funds at energy labs.

By Jeff Tollefson

May 7, 2013

When he took office in 2009, US President Barack Obama bolstered efforts to secure nuclear materials around the globe. That spring, speaking in Prague, he said that he would push Congress to ratify a long-pending treaty to ban nuclear testing. By 2010, he had reached an agreement with Russia to reduce the number of nuclear weapons in both countries' arsenals to historic lows.

Yet the weapons laboratories of the US Department of Energy continue to be lavished with money. The administration's 2014 budget proposal would boost funding for the weapons programme to US\$7.9 billion, nearly 30% more than when Obama took office. This rising flow of cash contrasts strikingly with a shrinking stockpile (see 'Small stockpile, big expense'). Life-extension programmes for weapons would receive more than \$1 billion of this 'stockpile-stewardship' budget, including \$537 million for a showcase initiative to modify and modernize the B61 line of nuclear gravity bombs.



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Sources: US DOE; Federation of American Scientists; Natural Resources Defense Council

By keeping weapons scientists busy at top-of-the-line facilities, Obama says that he is maintaining a nuclear deterrent, one based as much on retaining brains as on projecting brawn. “We’re going to keep investing in these programmes,” he said, during a non-proliferation event in Washington DC in December 2012, “because our national security depends on it.”

But the economic toll of doing so has grown increasingly — and, many argue, unnecessarily — steep. “It’s been far more expensive than it needs to be,” says Richard Garwin, a physicist and one of the designers of the first hydrogen bomb in the 1950s. “There’s a real lack of control over budgets and programmes.” The most vociferous critics go a step further, arguing that stockpile stewardship is about keeping people employed, and that Obama has used the programme to placate the sprawling nuclear-weapons complex and the politicians that support it while pursuing weapons reductions and non-proliferation goals.

Nuclear remix

Expensive science facilities and maintenance projects have become commonplace at US weapons labs since the end of the cold war in 1991 and the last US underground weapons test in 1992. Two costly stockpile-stewardship facilities, for example, are housed at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California: the National Ignition Facility, a giant laser that is intended to replicate fusion explosions; and Sequoia, the world’s second most powerful supercomputer, which is used to model nuclear explosions. Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico also has a supercomputer and was planning, until recently, to build a major plutonium-research facility.

The latest major stockpile-stewardship initiative is the B61 life-extension programme at Los Alamos. This will merge components from several different versions of the weapon within a new bombshell, which would include updated safety and security features and a new tail.

The consolidation — as well as the improved accuracy that a new tail would provide — would allow the United States to deploy fewer bombs, with lower explosive energy, in places such as Europe, says Donald Cook, who heads the weapons programme at the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), a semi-autonomous agency within the energy department. He adds that it would not necessarily be cheaper to simply maintain existing weapons indefinitely.

But observers say the B61 programme is much more expensive than it needs to be. An early analysis by the NNSA showed that a relatively simple refurbishment would have cost around \$1 billion, whereas the current programme is expected to cost about \$10 billion over the length of the project. “Rather than doing the minimum required, they are going for the best possible warheads,” says Stephen Young, who tracks nuclear-weapons issues for the Union of Concerned Scientists, a group based in Washington DC that is pushing for nuclear disarmament.

Few doubt the administration’s commitment to non-proliferation programmes, which received a boost of more than \$1.1 billion, or 73%, between 2008 and 2012. Much of that extra money was used to secure nuclear materials and reactors in other countries. But Obama’s latest budget request would cut non-proliferation programmes by more than \$400 million dollars to pay for weapons activities.

A new start

Some of the spending helped to nail down the 2010 agreement with Russia to limit the number of strategic weapons deployed by each country to 1,550 — a reduction of 30% from levels agreed in a 2002 treaty. To get the latest agreement ratified by the Senate, the administration laid out a plan to spend more than \$50 billion on weapons programmes between 2012 and 2017. Many Republican lawmakers now contend that, even with the recent budget boosts for the labs, the president is not keeping his promise.

Senator Bob Corker, a Republican from Tennessee, which is home to the Oak Ridge National Laboratory and the nearby Y-12 National Security Complex, says that Obama’s budget requests have come in hundreds of millions of dollars below the amount promised in 2010 and have delayed the new multibillion-dollar plutonium-research facility at Los Alamos.



“If the Senate believed we would be in this position today, it is unlikely to have approved the treaty in 2010,” Corker and Senator James Inhofe (Republican, Oklahoma) wrote last month in *Foreign Policy* magazine.

Other lawmakers think that the requests are excessive. During a budget hearing on 24 April, Senator Diane Feinstein (Democrat, California) pointed out that the amount requested for weapons activities in 2014 would be the same, in real terms, as what was spent in 1985 — when the United States kept 25,000 nuclear weapons and was conducting underground tests and designing new weapons. “None of that is happening today,” she said, calling the scope of the NNSA’s weapons activities “unsustainable and unrealistic”.

Worries about initiatives such as the new B61 bomb extend beyond costs. Nuclear watchdogs say that these projects transgress the spirit, if not the letter, of US commitments to disarmament under the 1968 Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, as well as Obama’s promise not to develop new nuclear warheads. A more accurate, lower-yield B61 would constitute a new capability for small nuclear strikes and could be tempting for a president to use, says Hans Kristensen, director of the Nuclear Information Project at the Federation of American Scientists, a nuclear watchdog group in Washington DC.

A follow-up programme to modify W78 and W88 warheads would edge even closer to creating ‘new’ weapons than would the B61 project. One option for the programme, which is currently funded only at the conceptual stage, would combine the primary fission starter bomb from one warhead with the secondary fusion device from another. This ensemble would then be encapsulated in a new shell to create a system that would work in ballistic missiles fired from land or sea. “We are moving into completely new territory,” Kristensen says. “This will challenge the core promise by the Obama administration that the United States will not build a new warhead.” The US Navy has objected to the proposal, saying that it does not want a new warhead, but that has not dissuaded the nuclear labs.

Cook says that trying to merge parts from several weapons into one is a legitimate effort to simplify the arsenal while maintaining robust capabilities. “I wouldn’t consider that new,” he says of the effort to modify the W78 and W88 warheads. Most importantly, he says, that programme, like the B61 effort, would allow the consolidation of weapons and open the way to further reductions in the arsenal.

The programme would almost surely be more expensive than the B61 project. And cost is the main issue for Garwin. He says that Obama ought to demand that the NNSA lay out a plan for cutting the cost of the stewardship programme by two-thirds, just to get a sense of how effective such a programme might be. That exercise would help the administration and Congress to better understand their options, he says.

The value of expensive stockpile-stewardship programmes is dubious, says Garwin. US weapons will remain credible, he adds, regardless of the results that come back from high-profile experiments such as the National Ignition Facility. And he points out that the W88, the most advanced weapon in the US arsenal, was designed on a computer that had less processing power than a personal desktop computer has today. He sees no need to capture the interests of an army of bomb designers with powerful lasers and supercomputers. “The training of weapons designers is important, but we only have a couple of dozen of them,” he says. “It’s not a big deal.”

Journal name: Nature, Volume: 497, Pages: 165–166, Date published: (09 May 2013), DOI: doi:10.1038/497165a

<http://www.nature.com/news/us-warheads-to-get-a-facelift-1.12948>

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RT (Russia Today) – Russia

US Nuclear Weapons Researchers Targeted with Internet Explorer Virus

May 07, 2013

Hackers have exploited a flaw in the widely popular Internet Explorer browser that allowed them to target the computers of nuclear researchers within the United States.

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The party responsible for the recently discovered security flaw in the IE 8 browser has yet to be identified, but researchers believe hackers employed a watering-hole attack to specifically target US government employees and contractors who browse a website regularly frequented by staffers in the nuclear sector.

Microsoft confirmed on Friday the existence of a zero-day code-execution exploit in IE 8 that, if not fixed, could allow hackers to install malware on a victim's machine by employing so-called "drive-by attacks." Indeed, the flaw was discovered only after an unknown number of computers became infected with a backdoor Trojan that was reportedly installed on the machines of web surfers who used IE 8 to navigate to a specific page on the US Department of Labor website.

"The Department of Labor site was rigged to redirect users to another site that infected computers with an iteration of the infamous 'Poison Ivy' Trojan, which was able to avoid detection by all but two major anti-virus products," Ben Weitzkorn wrote Monday for TechNews Daily.

According to Microsoft, *"The vulnerability may corrupt memory in a way that could allow an attacker to execute arbitrary code in the context of the current user within Internet Explorer."*

"An attacker could host a specially crafted website that is designed to exploit this vulnerability through Internet Explorer and then convince a user to view the website," the company said.

Researchers aren't sure yet who exploited the flaw and are still assessing any damages incurred by the issue, but they have managed to identify the single Department of Labor webpage that was compromised by hackers: the DoL's Site Exposure Matrices (SEM) page, described by the agency as *"a repository of information on toxic substances present at Department of Energy (DOE) and Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA) sites."* The SEM page contains information about the links between toxic substances and recognized occupational illnesses, and was designed to be used by staffers routinely exposed to nuclear elements and other hazardous materials.

"The target of this attack appears to be employees of the Dept of Energy that likely work in nuclear weapons research," security company Invincea announced on their blog.

Speaking to NextGov, Invincea founder and former Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency program manager Anup Ghosh said, *"We can infer the target of the attack are [Energy Department] folks in a watering hole style attack compromising one federal department to attack another."*

Suspects have yet to be identified, but watering hole attacks targeting specific groups of victims have been routinely used by state-sponsored cybercriminals in the past. Security firm AlienVault added that they believe the attack was carried out by "DeepPanda," a group of hackers alleged to have previously engaged in cyber espionage on behalf of the Chinese government.

Separate from the exploit, the Pentagon released on Monday a 92-page report, the 2013 "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China," which discusses in detail the potential cybercrimes that could attack US computers courtesy of the Far East.

The Labor Department has since taken the SEM page down, but the damage may indeed have already been done. Although the exploit in IE was only discovered last week, security firm CrowdStrike said its research led them to believe the campaign started in March and infected victims in 37 countries, including primarily machines in the US. Only computers that used version 8 of Internet Explorer and Windows XP, Windows Vista and Windows 7 to navigate to the SEM page were vulnerable, but IE is the most widely used browser in America with a market share of roughly 42 percent, according to StatCounter's April 2013 analysis.

<http://rt.com/usa/attack-department-nuclear-internet-955/>

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The Atlanta Journal-Constitution



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US Discussing Giving Russia Missile Defense Data

Wednesday, May 8, 2013

By DESMOND BUTLER - Associated Press (AP)

WASHINGTON — The head of the U.S. Missile Defense Agency says that the Obama administration has discussed declassifying key data on U.S. missile defense in order to provide it to Russia.

The administration has been exploring how to ease Russian concerns that the U.S. missile defense shield is aimed at countering Russia's nuclear arsenal.

Arms control advocates have suggested that revealing missile interceptor capabilities could provide a breakthrough on an issue that Russia says stands in the way of nuclear arms reductions. But doing so would provoke charges by Republicans that the administration is compromising national security to appease Moscow.

Under questioning at a hearing on Wednesday, Missile Defense Agency director Vice Adm. James Syring said that he has discussed declassifying data, including the speed of interceptors, with senior Defense Department officials.

Missile defense has long been a contentious issue between the United States and Russia. The U.S. has said that its capabilities are aimed at countering threats from Iran and North Korea. It says that its interceptors would not pose a threat to Russia's huge nuclear arsenal.

Obama has twice altered U.S. missile defense plans in Europe that Russia had stridently opposed. He has said the decisions were about better addressing threats. But Republicans have charged that they were aimed at soothing Russian objections.

<http://www.myaic.com/ap/ap/defense/us-discussing-giving-russia-missile-defense-data/nXk8g/>

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The Star Tribune – Minneapolis, MN

General Orders new Review of Nuclear Launch Officers' Failings; Cites Need to Find Root Cause

By ROBERT BURNS, Associated Press (AP)

May 9, 2013

WASHINGTON - The general who commands the nation's nuclear forces said Thursday he has ordered further review of failings discovered among Air Force officers who operate nuclear missiles. But he told Congress he was not alarmed by their shortcomings.

Gen. Robert Kehler, commander of U.S. Strategic Command, told a House Armed Services panel that the Air Force assured him it is searching for root causes of the problem among missile launch officers at Minot Air Force Base, N.D.

"As I sit here today, I don't see anything that would cause me to lose confidence" in their ability to perform their mission, Kehler said.

The Associated Press reported Wednesday that a March inspection of the 91st Missile Wing at Minot gave the missile crews the equivalent of a "D" grade in missile operations, leading to the removal from duty of an unprecedented 17 officers.

Kehler said he has told the Strategic Command's inspector general to review the results of the Minot inspection, which was performed by the Air Force Global Strike Command. That command is responsible for the missile unit's training and readiness but would cede responsibility for them to Strategic Command in time of war.

Kehler said "the Air Force is digging into this," and that his command's inspector general will review the previous inspection's results as well as the responses to it by commanders at Minot.

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"This has my personal attention," Kehler said.

At a separate House Appropriations Committee hearing Thursday, the Air Force chief of staff, Gen. Mark Welsh, found himself on the defensive over the Minot issue.

Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen, R-N.J., told Welsh that if the Minot problem had happened in the Navy's nuclear force, the individuals involved would have been dismissed. Welsh said Minot commanders were "concerned they were not taking the job seriously enough."

Kehler's comments stood in contrast to the tone of a confidential email obtained by the AP in which a senior officer at Minot sketched a picture of a troubled nuclear unit.

"We are, in fact, in a crisis right now," Lt. Col. Jay Folds, a deputy commander at Minot, told subordinates in the April 12 email. His group is responsible for all Minuteman 3 missile launch crews at Minot.

In his email, Folds lamented the remarkably poor reviews the launch officers received in the March inspection. Their missile launch skills were rated "marginal," which the Air Force told the AP was the equivalent of a "D" grade.

Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel responded to the AP report on Wednesday by demanding more information from the Air Force.

Welsh said on Wednesday that the problem does not suggest a lack of proper control over the nuclear missiles but rather was a symptom of turmoil in the ranks.

"The idea that we have people not performing to the standard we expect will never be good and we won't tolerate it," Welsh said when questioned about the problem at a congressional hearing on budget issues.

Underlying the Minot situation is a sense among some that the Air Force's nuclear mission is a dying field, as the government considers further reducing the size of the U.S. arsenal.

Welsh noted that because there are a limited number of command positions to which missile launch officers can aspire within the nuclear force, those officers tend to believe they have no future.

"That's actually not the case, but that's the view when you're in the operational force," Welsh said. "We have to deal with that."

Hagel himself, before he was defense secretary, signed a plan put forward a year ago by the private group Global Zero to eliminate the Air Force's intercontinental ballistic missiles and to eventually eliminate all nuclear weapons. At his Senate confirmation hearing, he said he supports President Barack Obama's goal of zero nuclear weapons but only through negotiations.

Hagel's spokesman, George Little, said the defense secretary was briefed on the Minot situation as reported by the AP on Wednesday and demanded that he be provided more details.

Welsh's civilian boss, Air Force Secretary Michael Donley, suggested a silver lining to the trouble at Minot. The fact that Minot commanders identified 17 underperformers was evidence that the Air Force has strengthened its monitoring of the nuclear force, he said. And he stressed that launch crew members typically are relatively junior officers — lieutenants and captains — with limited service experience.

It is the duty of commanders, Donley said, to "ride herd" on those young officers with "this awesome responsibility" of controlling missiles capable of destroying entire countries.

Donley noted that he is particularly sensitive to any indication of weakness in the nuclear force because he took over as Air Force secretary in October 2008 after his predecessor, Michael Wynne, was fired by then-Defense Secretary Robert Gates for a series of nuclear embarrassments. Donley was charged with cleaning up the problem.

It appeared the Minot force, which is one of three responsible for controlling — and, if necessary, launching — the Air Force's 450 strategic nuclear missiles, is an outlier.



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The Air Force told the AP on Wednesday that the two other missile wings — at Malmstrom Air Force Base, Mont., and at F.E. Warren Air Force Base, Wyo. — earned scores of "excellent" in the most recent inspection of their ICBM launch skills. That is two notches above the "marginal" rating at Minot and one notch below the highest rating of "outstanding." Each of the three wings operates 150 Minuteman 3 missiles.

The Malmstrom unit was inspected in December 2012, the F.E. Warren unit in May 2012.

Michael Corgan, a nuclear weapons officer in the Navy in the 1960s, said the Air Force cannot afford to let its launch control crews lose focus on their mission.

"The kinds of things that caused those Air Force officers to be rated 'marginal' could well be what seem like trivial errors," Corgan said. "But in the nuke business you are not supposed to get anything wrong — anything." Corgan is a professor of international relations at Boston University.

Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill., chairman of the Senate Appropriations defense subcommittee, expressed outrage, telling Welsh and Donley that the AP report revealed a problem that "could not be more troubling."

The 17 cases mark the Air Force's most extensive sidelining ever of launch crew members, according to Lt. Col. Angie Blair, a spokeswoman for Air Force Global Strike Command, which oversees the missile units as well as nuclear-capable bombers. The 91st Missile Wing has 150 officers assigned to launch control duty.

In his congressional testimony, Welsh said Folds and other senior commanders determined that the problematic launch officers had "more of an attitude problem than a proficiency problem."

He said he wished Folds had "used different language" in his email.

"The word 'rot' didn't excite me, but it got my attention," Welsh said, adding that he does not believe "rot" is the problem. "I don't believe we have a nuclear surety risk at Minot Air Force Base," referring to the danger of an accident or unauthorized launch.

In addition to the 17, possible disciplinary action is pending against one other officer at Minot whom investigators found had intentionally broken a safety rule in an unspecified act that could have compromised the secret codes that enable the launching of missiles that stand on high alert in underground silos in the nation's midsection. Officials said there was no compromise of missile safety or security.

Advising his troops on April 12 that they had "fallen," Folds wrote that drastic corrective action was required because "we didn't wake up" after the March inspection that he said amounted to a failure, even though the unit's overall performance technically was rated "satisfactory."

"And now we're discovering such rot in the crew force that your behavior while on alert is accepting of" weapons safety rule violations, possible code compromises and other failings, "all in the name of not inconveniencing yourselves," Folds wrote.

<http://www.startribune.com/nation/206756191.html?page=all&prepage=1&c=y#continue>

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Montreal Gazette – Montreal, Canada

Pentagon Report for 1st Time says China Government, Military Responsible for US Cyberattacks

By Lolita C. Baldor, Associated Press (AP)

May 6, 2013

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WASHINGTON - The Pentagon for the first time used its annual report on China to directly assert that Beijing's government and military have conducted computer-based attacks against the U.S., including efforts to steal information from federal agencies.

In a new report on the Chinese military, the Defence Department goes a small step further than it has gone in the past, when it said that cyber-attacks originated in China and may be linked to Beijing's use of civilian experts in clandestine attacks against American companies. But over the past year, U.S. government officials and private cyber-security experts have increasingly stepped up accusations that the Chinese government is directly involved in cyber espionage against the U.S.

In February, a U.S.-based cyber-security firm, Mandiant, issued a report accusing a secret Chinese military unit in Shanghai of years of cyber-attacks against more than 140 companies, a majority of them American.

The Pentagon report, released Monday, said that, "In 2012, numerous computer systems around the world, including those owned by the U.S. government, continued to be targeted for intrusions, some of which appear to be attributable directly to the Chinese government and military."

It said China is using its cyber capabilities to collect intelligence against U.S. diplomatic, economic and defence programs. And the report warned that the computer skills needed for such espionage is similar to those needed to conduct cyber-warfare.

The new wording in the report continues an escalating effort by U.S. officials to call out the Chinese on the cyber-attacks and to press for a more open dialogue with Beijing on the problem.

The annual report also provides a detailed overview of China's military progression.

In assessing the latest developments, the report said Beijing's leaders are increasingly looking to the People's Liberation Army to perform missions that reach beyond China's periphery. It contributed, for example, to supporting evacuation operations in Libya, sent a hospital ship to Latin America and took on leadership roles in United Nations peace operations.

"To advance its broader strategic objectives and self-proclaimed 'core interests,' China is pursuing a robust and systematic military modernization program," the report said.

The report said China is modernizing its short-range ballistic missile force and is acquiring greater numbers of conventional medium-range missiles to increase the range at which it can conduct precision strikes against land targets and naval ships, including aircraft carriers, operating far from China's shores.

Associated Press writer Robert Burns contributed to this report.

<http://www.montrealgazette.com/business/Pentagon+report+time+says+China+government+military/8344160/story.html>

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China Daily – China

Pentagon's Cyber Attack Accusations Irresponsible

May 7, 2013

(Xinhua)

BEIJING - A Pentagon report that China is conducting cyber attacks against the United States is irresponsible and harmful to the mutual trust between the two countries, according to a military expert on Tuesday.

In its annual report to Congress on Chinese military developments, the Pentagon said the US government continues to be targeted with (cyber) intrusions, "some of which appear to be attributable directly to the Chinese government and military."

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In response, Wang Xinjun, a researcher with the Academy of Military Sciences of the Chinese People's Liberation Army, said it was irresponsible for the Pentagon to make such an assertion as the Chinese government and armed forces have never sanctioned hacking activities.

"Although it is common sense that you cannot determine sources of cyber attacks only through IP addresses, some people in the Pentagon still prefer believing they are from China as they always bear a sense of rivalry," Wang said. "It is an allegation based on presupposition."

He continued, "The groundless accusations reflect the US distrust of China."

In an information era, the international community is increasingly threatened by cyber security problems. Both China and the US are victims of cyber crimes and should work together to tackle the problems, Wang said.

He suggested that the first thing to forge a collaboration is to improve mutual trust rather than making false accusations, otherwise, more hostile actions will be expected in the future.

http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-05/07/content_16482216.htm

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The Moscow Times – Russia

OPINION/Article

Strong-Armed Tactics

05 May 2013 | Issue 5121

By Alexander Golts

It seems that disarmament talks and treaties, one of the most promising areas of U.S.-Russian cooperation, might be removed from the bilateral agenda soon. The media reports that the U.S. has initiated a program to modernize the B61 tactical nuclear bomb with advanced guidance mechanisms and to mount it on F-16 and F-35 jet fighters. But at stake here is not simply the modernization of the United States' estimated 200 tactical bombs located in Europe. After all, Russia has five times more tactical nuclear weapons.

The problem is that the decision to modernize the B61 nuclear missile effectively indicates that the U.S. is backtracking on a goal that U.S. President Barack Obama had named as a top priority when he first took office: the impossible task of eliminating all nuclear weapons in the world. Former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev proclaimed the same lofty goal 20 years ago. But it is not surprising that the declarations by both leaders were met with a healthy dose of skepticism.

Former U.S. President George W. Bush's invasion of Iraq taught the world a lesson that it already had known for decades: possession of nuclear weapons provides national security and serves as the great equalizer on the global arena. In a sense, it is like the famous long-barreled revolver that was popular in the Wild West of the 19th century. As the saying goes, "The Lord made all men different, but Samuel Colt made them equal." It is nearly impossible to convince states who are serious about becoming nuclear powers to give up their ambitions, but two presidential terms provides ample time for Obama to make significant strides toward reducing the nuclear arsenals of the U.S. and Russia, both of which hold 90 percent of all such weapons in existence.

After signing the New START agreement in 2010, Washington proposed negotiations to reduce tactical nuclear weapons. Strategic weapons are controlled by limiting the number of carriers: aerial bombers as well as missiles based on both land and submarines. But tactical nuclear weapons can be delivered by numerous means: bombs, cruise missiles, artillery systems and aircraft, which means that reductions can only be achieved by limiting the total number of nuclear warheads. In addition, monitoring compliance with future tactical arms reduction agreements would require allowing inspectors to monitor each country's nuclear warhead storage depots. That would be a windfall for diplomats because negotiating the terms for such inspections would alone take years. The U.S. proposed that the two countries start small by exchanging data on the number of tactical nuclear weapons each holds.

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But Russia immediately balked at this suggestion, demanding that negotiations on tactical nuclear weapons begin only after the 200 tactical nuclear bombs located in Germany, Belgium, Holland, Italy and Turkey are removed. The problem is that NATO member states are divided on this question. Germany and Belgium would like to get rid of the nuclear weapons, while other NATO states believe the bombs provide crucial nuclear deterrence and collective security in Europe. In any case, long and arduous negotiations within NATO would be required before any bombs could be removed.

By making the removal of all U.S. tactical nuclear weapons located in Europe a prerequisite to talks, Russia effectively rejected the call for negotiations. Washington effectively confirmed that Russia's condition to remove all tactical bombs was a non-starter by announcing its program to and proceeded to upgrade its B61s. Obviously, those 200 nuclear bombs will now remain in Europe for a long time to come.

Pro-Kremlin analysts contend that although Moscow holds from five to 10 times as many tactical nuclear weapons located on Russian territory, their range is too limited to reach Washington and New York. But modern Western F-16s and F-35s could easily fly to Central or Eastern European countries, from which they could strike Moscow and St. Petersburg with tactical nuclear weapons. If the Kremlin were seriously worried about such a threat, however, it would have engaged in negotiations in hopes of achieving the removal of some of those bombs in exchange for additional reductions to Russia's nuclear arsenal. Yet the Kremlin is not looking for solutions. Rather, it is constantly searching for ways to draw the West into protracted and futile debate over imaginary problems to bolster its image as a major power and to manipulate the political landscape toward its own short-term and ill-conceived advantage. This means that it is highly unlikely that there will be any real results from discussion about reducing tactical weapons in Europe and Russia.

Even worse, the New START treaty, the crown jewel of Obama's nuclear reduction policy, might now be in doubt. Deputy Defense Minister Yuri Borisov recently announced that the Moscow Institute of Thermal Technology, the manufacturer of the Topol-M, Yars and Bulava missiles, was taking a serious look at developing a railways-based nuclear missile program. These weapons were one of the greatest headache for Pentagon strategists in the late 1980s because, unlike silo-based missiles, they are difficult to detect from satellite surveillance. Railway-based missiles can be placed at virtually any point across Russia's vast territory and hidden from U.S. view. It is no coincidence that railway-based nuclear weapons were shelved 10 years ago to close that confrontational, Cold War chapter in U.S.-Russian relations. Thus, if an official decision is made to revive that system, it could destabilize the strategic balance between Russia and the U.S., especially since U.S. senators insisted on prohibiting the redevelopment of railway-based missiles as a condition for ratifying the New START.

As a result, the prospect for U.S.-Russian cooperation on nuclear arms reductions is as cloudy as ever.

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<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/opinion/article/strong-armed-tactics/479571.html>

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Foreign Policy

OPINION/Commentary

Send the Nukes Back to South Korea

At the stroke of a pen, President Obama could reassure a key ally and put Pyongyang back in its box. Here's how.

By BENNETT RAMBERG

May 6, 2013

Months of tensions on the Korean peninsula have emerged at an awkward time for the United States: In the aftermath of draining wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and with a budget deficit still at a near-record high, there is little appetite in Washington for more military commitments. How should the United States reconcile its global fatigue, an empty

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treasury, and a history of failed diplomacy with North Korea with the requirements to defend its South Korean ally and itself?

The reinstallation of nuclear weapons into South Korea may be the answer. It would enhance deterrence, reassure the South Korean people and, in the long run, possibly lead to the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

Largely forgotten today, the United States housed 11 types of nuclear weapons in South Korea from 1958 to 1991. Introduced by the Eisenhower administration, they provided an economical substitute for the large number of boots on the ground that departed with the end of the Korean War in 1953. The policy meshed with the Pentagon's global nuclear deterrent directed at the Soviet Union and China from East Asia.

After the Cold War ended, the George H.W. Bush administration removed the arsenal as part of a global nuclear drawdown. In February 1992, North and South Korea signed a joint declaration stating that the peninsula would be permanently denuclearized. But even before the ink was dry, Pyongyang cheated, refusing Seoul's request to inspect suspect sites.

In the two decades that followed, North Korea continued to drop out of agreements aimed at curtailing its nuclear weapons program: the nuclear nonproliferation treaty; the 1994 Agreed Framework, which would have replaced its nuclear reactors with the more difficult to weaponize light-water reactors; the accord after the 2007 Six Party Talks, in which Pyongyang promised to shut down its main nuclear reactor; and the 2012 understanding with Washington to suspend nuclear and long-range missile testing. Despite this bleak history, Washington seems to believe it can talk, sanction, induce, coax or threaten the North to give up its nuclear program. As Secretary of State John Kerry put it during his mid-April Asia trip, "North Korea will not be accepted as a nuclear power."

But unless Washington wishes to initiate military action, it may have no choice. The fact remains that North Korea *has* nukes. It conducted its third nuclear-weapons test in February, and in April it vowed to restart its Yongbyon plutonium reactor and uranium enrichment plant. It's a reality that's worth repeating: North Korea will not give up the bomb.

Instead of pretending that it can force Pyongyang to denuclearize, Washington should focus on containing the threat posed by North Korea. U.S. policymakers intended the March B-2 and B-52 bomber flyovers to demonstrate the durability of the nuclear umbrella, as both aircrafts are capable of carrying nuclear weapons. However, such sporadic displays of force will not convince North Korea that Washington will rebuff possible attempts at nuclear intimidation of the South in the future. But nuclear weapons on South Korean soil might.

A February poll by the Asan Institute, a South Korean think tank, said that 66 percent of South Korean respondents support the development of a nuclear-weapons program. While it could take a few years for the South to generate its own bomb, all the United States would need is a presidential order. At the stroke of a pen, Obama would enhance deterrence and reassure the South Korean people. Although China would protest, the United States could assuage it by presenting the deployment as a way of lessening the probability that South Korean and Japanese develop their own nuclear weapons.

Pyongyang would likely be furious. But what else could it threaten that it hasn't already threatened over the last two months? And even if Pyongyang wanted to produce more nuclear weapons in response, it appears to lack the capability to do so.

Ideally, U.S. nukes in South Korea would eventually provide the leverage for the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, mirroring the European experience near the end of the Cold War. In 1983, after Moscow installed a new generation of intermediate-range missiles in the Soviet Union, Washington responded with nuclear-tipped Pershing II rockets and ground-launched cruise missiles in West Germany. The result provided the United States with the clout to negotiate the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, which eliminated that class of missiles for both superpowers.

U.S. deployment on the Korean Peninsula could have a similar effect. But only if Washington accepts that its current approach has failed.



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http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/05/06/nukes_obama_south_north_korea

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The DIPLOMAT – Japan
OPINION/Flashpoints

India, “Cold Start” and Pakistani Tactical Nukes

By Zachary Keck
May 8, 2013

"India will not be the first to use nuclear weapons, but if it is attacked with such weapons, it would engage in nuclear retaliation which will be massive and designed to inflict unacceptable damage on its adversary. The label on a nuclear weapon used for attacking India, strategic or tactical, is irrelevant from the Indian perspective," Shyam Saran, former Foreign Secretary and the current chairman of India's National Security Advisory Board, said in a recent speech, the *Times of India* reported.

The key in Saran's comments is the reference to tactical nuclear weapons. Pakistan is believed to be developing such weapons to counter India's "Cold Start" military doctrine. In recent years, terrorist attacks on India originating from Pakistan—most notably the 2008 Mumbai attacks—have led many Indian policymakers to conclude that Islamabad, emboldened by its nuclear deterrent, is supporting certain terrorist groups based out of Pakistan who carry out attacks on the Indian homeland.

After the Mumbai attack Indian's military leaders reportedly developed a new doctrine called Cold Start, which called for Indian troops to rapidly mobilize for limited conventional strikes on the Pakistani side of the border immediately following a terrorist attack. The rationale was that this would give Delhi the ability to retaliate against Islamabad without sparking a full-fledged nuclear exchange.

Lacking the conventional military power to confront India's military, Pakistani military officials are believed to be building tactical nuclear weapons to deploy in the field for possible use against the invading Indian military forces.

Saran's speech appears to be India's response to Pakistan's theatre nuclear weapons. As he explained it:

"Pakistani motivation is to dissuade India from contemplating conventional punitive retaliation to sub-conventional but highly destructive and disruptive cross-border terrorist strikes such as the horrific 26/11 attack on Mumbai. What Pakistan is signaling to India and to the world is that India should not contemplate retaliation even if there is another Mumbai because Pakistan has lowered the threshold of nuclear use to the theatre level. This is nothing short of nuclear blackmail, no different from the irresponsible behavior one witnesses in North Korea."

Saran then shot down the notion that India would distinguish between theatre and strategic nuclear weapons usage.

"A limited nuclear war is a contradiction in terms," He said. "Any nuclear exchange, once initiated, would swiftly and inexorably escalate to the strategic level. Pakistan would be prudent not to assume otherwise as it sometimes appears to do, most recently by developing and perhaps deploying theatre nuclear weapons."

Saran is a veteran diplomat with extensive experience dealing with nuclear issues. Before his current position, for instance, he served as the prime minister's special envoy to the negotiations over the U.S.-India civilian nuclear deal—where he was the counterpart to R. Nicholas Burns—and the Nuclear Suppliers Group. He stepped down from that post in 2010.

A proponent of India's Look East Policy, Saran also has extensive experience dealing with China including over the border issue. Last year, he called on India's foreign policy establishment to develop a deeper understanding of China's strategic culture.

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During his recent speech Saran took aim at China directly stating, "Chinese assistance to Pakistan's strategic program continues apace," according to Michael Krepon at *Arms Control Wonk*.

Krepon also reported that Saran had some harsh words for Pakistan's military:

"Pakistan is the only country where nuclear assets are under the command and control of the military and it is the military's perceptions and ambitions which govern the development, deployment and use of these weapons. This is a dangerous situation precisely because the military's perceptions are not fully anchored in a larger national political and economic narrative.... There is an air of unreality about the often adulatory remarks about the Pakistani military's stewardship of the country's military assets."

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<http://thediplomat.com/flashpoints-blog/2013/05/08/india-cold-start-and-pakistani-tactical-nukes/>

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Foreign Policy

OPINION/Rebuttal

The Case for Nuclear Unilateralism

New START may be flawed, but it also holds an opportunity for Obama to do something truly momentous.

By YOUSAF BUTT

May 8, 2013

Writing in *Foreign Policy*, Robert Joseph and Eric Edelman complain that the New START arms reduction treaty with Russia is flawed because it's somehow akin to unilateral disarmament. Indeed, New START has its flaws but not for the reasons Joseph and Edelman offer. The main problem with the treaty has less to do with Russia than with the outrageous ransom demanded by the far-right Republicans -- and granted by the administration -- for passing the treaty. The domestic political bargains struck to gain support for ratification -- huge increases in nuclear complex funding, warhead maintenance, and missile defense -- were simply not worth the modest bilateral reductions in warheads. This ransom paid to gain passage of the treaty has been not only expensive but also, in the case of ineffective missile defense, destabilizing.

In view of the partisan bickering, domestic demands for pork, and ineffective military hardware involved with ratifying New START, the unilateral nuclear arms reductions so despised by Joseph and Edelman suddenly don't seem like a bad option.

Obama entered office not favoring the ill-tested missile defense system but changed his mind, in part, because he understood he needed additional votes to ratify New START. This missile-defense "time bomb" -- attached to New START at GOP insistence -- is what is now going off, poisoning Washington's relations with both Moscow and Beijing. The huge concessions -- both monetary and diplomatic -- made were simply not worth the modest goals of the treaty and, in fact, are now actively undermining it. Of course, it may have been worth tolerating deteriorating relations with Russia if the planned missile-defense system were actually effective against Iran or North Korea. It isn't.

Joseph and Edelman argue that the United States is reducing nuclear weapons while other nations modernize their stockpiles. They are right: Missile defense has provided a convenient pretext for hawkish Russian and Chinese analysts arguing for increased support for enlarging and upgrading their strategic weaponry. So Capitol Hill has succeeded in alienating Russia and China over a missile defense system that will provide an ineffective defense against North Korea and Iran.

In short, U.S. national security would be much better off without this huge funding increase for the weapons complex, without missile defense, and without New START. Instead, we have all three. Though bilateral arms reduction treaties can be sensible, they should not be ratified at any cost.

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Contrary to what Joseph and Edelman argue, there is much to recommend unilateralism, especially in arcane and bureaucratic fields such as arms control, populated with armies of specialists, diplomats, and lawyers who can take months to resolve the minutiae in various subsections of the various subparagraphs. As Naval War College professor Joan Johnson-Freese summed up regarding these bureaucrats: "...their careers depend not on progress, but on the appearance of progress -- which, of course, requires further study and discussion -- they assiduously avoid providing decision-makers with viable options for action. (As John Adams complains about Congress in the famous musical *1776*, they merely 'piddle, twiddle, and resolve / not one damn thing do they solve.')

Indeed, unilateralism can be a superb tool to cut through this thicket of bilateral (or, worse, multilateral) bureaucracy. In fact, in a subtle sense, the mere act of hammering out a bilateral treaty with Russia casts each party in an adversarial role which may reinforce the historical perception of enmity. If we are now finally comfortable that the Cold War has ended, why not simply reduce our nuclear stockpile? No need to discuss anything with Russia.

Because New START will be in effect through early 2021, Washington could go ahead and unilaterally reduce the U.S. nuclear stockpile while still benefiting from monitoring and transparency measures provided by the treaty. President Obama could do this without paying further ransom to the pork-hungry Congress. And for the next seven years, the United States would benefit from the provisions of New START that permit Washington to keep tabs on the Russian nuclear stockpile.

The chief of the Strategic Plans and Policy Division of the Air Force has indicated that U.S. nuclear-deterrent needs can safely be met by just 311 nuclear weapons. We ought to go to that number right away, or perhaps even substantially lower, and let Russia do whatever it wants. Problem solved. No meetings, airfares, coffee-breaks, plenary sessions, or multi-billion-dollar missile defenses required. All these savings could be applied to real military missions and projects.

And if Russia wants to continue to waste their precious rubles on a bloated and outdated stockpile, that's their problem.

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http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/05/08/the_case_for_nuclear_unilateralism

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The National Interest – Washington, D.C.

OPINION/Commentary

France Isn't Aiming for Nuclear Zero

By Frank Klotz

May 8, 2013

The French government finally unveiled its long-awaited *livre blanc* on defense and national security last week. As expected, the white paper contains grim news for the French military, capping spending at current levels and calling for substantial personnel reductions over the next five years. But one aspect of the French defense posture emerged virtually unscathed. Despite earlier reports about possible cuts in order to save money, the white paper reaffirms long-standing policies on the fundamental purpose and composition of French nuclear forces. While many officials and observers in the West discount the role of nuclear weapons in national security strategy now that the Cold War is over, the French government clearly takes a different view.

It's been nearly a year since Francois Hollande assumed the French presidency with promises of change in both substance and style from that of his predecessor, Nicolas Sarkozy. Two months after assuming office, Hollande personally commissioned the writing of a new defense white paper to account for changes in the strategic and economic landscape that had occurred since the previous report was published in 2008. He also wanted no doubt to put his own stamp on defense spending, which commands nearly ten percent of the national budget.



The new white paper was originally due to hit the streets earlier this year. The context for the entire exercise, however, kept shifting. Across the Atlantic, U.S. officials continued to tout the so-called “pivot” to the Asia-Pacific region in response to a rising China and a recalcitrant North Korea. Following Pyongyang’s third nuclear test in February, Washington took steps to ratchet up U.S. military presence in the region even further. The new American strategic priority left the European NATO allies, including France, to ponder anew the task of providing for their collective self-defense. That of course has not precluded many NATO countries from continuing to reduce defense expenditures in the face of mounting budget pressures.

As the United States was turning its focus toward the east, France was at the same time demonstrating its continued willingness to use military force in support of its foreign policy objectives. A year earlier, it had fired the opening shots of the military intervention in Libya that ultimately toppled Muammar Gaddafi. In January 2013, France launched Operation *Serval* in its former African colony of Mali to counter the threat posed by Islamic rebels to the central government in Bamako. With nearly 4,000 soldiers still on the ground, the French could be involved in this endeavor for some time to come, even as more responsibility is transferred to a United Nations peacekeeping force this summer.

Observers have noted that these recent and unexpected developments moderated the temptation to dramatically cut French defense spending in order to meet the government’s goal of reducing the deficit to 3 percent of gross domestic product. The projected reductions are nevertheless substantial. According to press reports, the military is set to lose as many as twenty-four thousand more employees between 2016 and 2019, on top of cuts initially set in motion by the previous president. The new white paper also confirms that France will not acquire a second aircraft carrier to complement the existing *Charles de Gaulle*. On the other hand, greater emphasis will be accorded to intelligence and cyber-security.

Despite the desire to find savings in the defense budget, French nuclear forces were left untouched. In a sense, this result was pre-determined. In his initial instructions to the white-paper commission, Hollande confirmed that he intended for France to maintain a strategic nuclear deterrent. The only question was how best to coordinate with other aspects of French defense and national-security policy.

The new white paper closely adheres to traditional French thinking on nuclear matters—views shared in the past by conservative and socialist governments alike. It asserts that nuclear forces are “the ultimate guarantee of our sovereignty.” Along with *protection* and *intervention*, *dissuasion* is identified as one of the three priorities of French defense strategy. Its purpose is to protect against all aggression by other states against French vital interests, wherever it comes from and in whatever the form. The white paper adds almost parenthetically that French nuclear forces also contribute to the security of the Atlantic alliance and Europe.

The white paper says very little about the actual composition of the French nuclear deterrent force other than to note that it comprises both naval and air components. It reveals that the France’s nuclear arsenal has less than three hundred warheads, which is substantially below the five hundred it reportedly held in the 1990s. The overall size of the nuclear force is purportedly based on the rather ambiguous criterion of “strict sufficiency,” which the French have said cannot be measured against the yardstick of what other nations might possess.

Even though France has reduced the overall numbers of its nuclear weapons since the end of the Cold War, it has nevertheless undertaken major programs to update those that remain. It has replaced its fleet of five ballistic-missile submarines with four *Le Triomphant*-class boats, with the last of the new series being commissioned in late 2010. The new submarines are in turn being outfitted with new missiles, a process that should be completed by 2018. Like its predecessor, the 2013 white paper affirms that France will retain the practice of continuous at-sea deterrence patrols with its submarines, though it does not specify how many will normally be under way at any given time.

The French air force has also upgraded its nuclear-capable aircraft. For several years, this force consisted of Mirage 2000N fighters. In 2010, a squadron of new Rafale fighters was also certified to perform nuclear-attack missions. (The French Navy also operates nuclear-capable Rafale fighters that can be deployed aboard its sole aircraft carrier.) The French have also developed a more capable air-to-surface missile—the advanced version of the Air-Sol Moyenne Portée (ASMP-A)—to deliver nuclear weapons by aircraft.



Finally, the French have reportedly developed new nuclear warheads for both new sea-launched and air-launched missiles. Starting in 2015, the new sea-launched missiles will be outfitted with a new nuclear warhead, the Tête Nucléaire Océanique, a process expected to be completed on all four boats by 2018. The new warhead for the air-to-surface missile, called the Tête Nucléaire Aeroportée, began production in 2007. Both warheads are said to be based on design concepts tested in France's last nuclear tests in 1996.

The white paper says nothing about changing or reducing French nuclear forces. In fact, if the primary objective is to save money, there actually may be little to be gained at the moment by doing so. The most recent French nuclear-modernization cycle is now over the hump in fielding new ballistic-missile submarines and nuclear-capable fighters, as well as the weapons they carry. Having already made this enormous investment, the only savings that can now be achieved are those associated with operations, maintenance and personnel. Given the prominent and continued role that nuclear forces play in the overall French strategy, the government is apparently not willing to go after them.

Arms control and disarmament likewise carry little weight as an argument within the French government for reducing nuclear forces right now. The white paper claims that France is actively working in favor of "general and complete disarmament." It points out that it has engaged in unilateral reductions since the 1990s. It also expresses support for the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (which France has already ratified, while the United States has not), as well as starting negotiations to ban the production of fissile materials for use in nuclear weapons. None of these initiatives would impact France's currently deployed nuclear forces.

The white paper is, however, totally silent on whether France might become involved in multilateral arms-control efforts to reduce existing nuclear arsenals. The United States and Russia have engaged in negotiations to limit and reduce their respective nuclear forces for over forty years. The successful conclusion of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty in 2010 marked the latest step in this process and, in the words of senior U.S. officials, set the stage for even further cuts. The other nuclear weapon states have so far not played a direct role in these negotiations. Though they disagree on timing, both U.S. and Russian officials have said that if their nation's respective numbers continue to come down, the capabilities of the other nuclear-weapons states will need to be addressed in some form or fashion in the future.

Based on what is said—or left unsaid—in the latest white paper, the French are not yet ready to oblige. Instead, the government fully intends to maintain nuclear forces at levels needed to protect French national-security interests as it defines them. For the moment, that means maintaining the nuclear status quo. It also means that the France is unlikely to join the other nuclear powers in negotiations to reduce nuclear forces anytime soon.

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<http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/france-isnt-aiming-nuclear-zero-8440?page=show>

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Eurasia Review – Spain

OPINION/Analysis

May 8, 2013

Russia Bidding Farewell to Soviet Nukes – Analysis

By In-Depth News (IDN)

By J C Suresh

Russia is in the midst of a comprehensive modernization of its nuclear forces that began more than a decade ago. The upgrade, which involves replacing all Soviet-era ballistic missiles with fewer improved missiles, is now approaching a point at which the number of modern weapons will shortly exceed the number of old ones. In a decade, virtually all of the Soviet-era weapons will be gone. This will leave in place a significantly smaller but effective force that will be more mobile than the one it replaces, according to a new study.



The paper published by experts at the Federation of American Scientists (FAS) estimates that as of March 2013, Russia has a military stockpile of approximately 4,500 nuclear warheads, of which roughly 1,800 strategic warheads are deployed on missiles and at bomber bases. Another 700 strategic warheads are in storage, along with 2,000 nonstrategic warheads. In addition to the military stockpile for operational forces, a large number – some 4,000 – of retired but still largely intact warheads await dismantlement.

Authors of the paper titled ‘Russian nuclear forces, 2013’, Hans M. Kristensen and Robert S. Norris point out that unlike Britain, France, and the United States, Russia has not declared how many warheads it possesses in its nuclear stockpile. Moreover, although transparency about Russian strategic nuclear forces is increasing for the US government due to data exchanges and on-site inspections, it is decreasing at the public level for the international arms control community.

This is because Russia does not disclose such information and the US government has stopped releasing aggregate data supplied to it by Russia under strategic arms reduction agreements. As a result, there is some uncertainty in the estimates provided in the paper named the ‘Nuclear Notebook’.

Nevertheless, based on public statements made by Russian officials, newspaper articles, observations from commercial satellite images, private conversations with government officials, and their analysis of Russian nuclear forces over many years, the authors are confident that the paper provides “the best unclassified estimate of Russian nuclear forces”.

ICBMs with warheads

According to Kristensen and Norris, Russia deploys an estimated 326 intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) with nearly 1,050 warheads. The ICBMs are organized under the Strategic Rocket Forces (SRF). The two experts say that over the next decade, Russia’s ICBM force is scheduled to undergo significant changes.

The ICBMs are organized under the Strategic Rocket Forces (SRF) into three missile armies with a total of 12 divisions, a structure the SRF commander, Colonel-General Sergei Karakayev, says will continue through 2016 and beyond.

Over the next decade, Russia’s ICBM force is scheduled to undergo significant changes. By 2016, according to Karakayev, SS-18, SS-19, and SS-25 missiles will constitute only about 40 percent of the ICBM force, down from approximately 72 percent in 2011. To meet this goal, over the next four years Russia will have to retire more than half of its ICBM force, mainly mobile SS-25s. By 2021, according to the announced plans, 98 percent of the old missiles will be gone.

The FAS experts aver that to compensate for the retirement of old missiles, Russia is planning to produce significant numbers of SS-27 Mod. 2 (RS-24) ICBMs. “But the current and expected production and deployment rate of new ICBMs is not rapid enough to offset the retirement of the old missiles. Even if Russia manages to deploy an average of 15 new missiles per year – something it has not been able to accomplish over the past two decades – by the early 2020s the ICBM force will likely shrink to around 220 missiles, nearly one-third fewer than today.”

According to the paper, Russia deploys three kinds of SS-27 missiles: the SS-27 Mod. 1, a single-warhead missile that comes in either mobile (RS-12M1) or silo-based (RS-12M2) variants, and the SS-27 Mod. 2 (RS-24), called the Yars in Russia, a mobile missile equipped with multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicles (MIRVs).

Deployment of the SS-27 Mod. 1 was completed in 2012 at a total of 78 missiles: 60 silo-based missiles with the 60th Missile Division in Tatishchevo and 18 road-mobile missiles with the 54th Guards Missile Division at Teykovo.

Future ICBM deployments

Kristensen and Norris envisage that all new Russian ICBM deployments for the foreseeable future will be of MIRVed RS-24 ICBMs. Deployment of the first two regiments with a total of 18 mobile missiles has been completed at the 54th Guards Missile Division at Teykovo, northeast of Moscow. Preparations began in 2012 for three additional missile divisions to receive the RS-24:



Initially, silo-based RS-24s will be deployed at the 28th Missile Guards Division at Kozelsk to replace the SS-19s, and then mobile RS-24s will replace SS-25s at the 51st Missile Guards Division at Irkutsk and the 39th Guards Missile Division at Novosibirsk. Once Irkutsk and Novosibirsk are complete, deployment will follow at the 42nd Missile Division at Nizhny Tagil, replacing SS-25s currently deployed there. After silo-based RS-24s are installed at Kozelsk, deployment will follow at the 13th Missile Division at Dombarovsky, replacing the SS-18s currently deployed there (Interfax-AVN, 2012d, 2012e).

“Once completed, this transformation will reduce the Russian ICBM force structure from 12 to 7 missile divisions: 3 silo divisions (1 SS-27 Mod. 1 and 2 SS-27 Mod. 2, or RS-24), and 4 mobile divisions (1 SS-27 Mod. 1 and 5 SS-27 Mod. 2, or RS-24). Most significant, replacing mobile, single-warhead SS-25 missiles with mobile, MIRVed RS-24 missiles could increase the portion of mobile ICBM warheads from 15 percent today to approximately 70 percent by 2022,” says the paper.

The two experts are not sure how many warheads each RS-24 carries. A US defence official told them last year (2012) that the missile can carry up to six warheads, which would be similar to the loading on the sea-based variant, the Bulava. But the head of the SRF is on record saying the RS-24 can carry up to four warheads, and a Bush administration official stated in 2009 that Russian flight tests had demonstrated the capability to carry three warheads. “We are therefore revising our estimate and will count up to four warheads per RS-24,” the experts say.

Liquid-fuelled ICBM

The paper further notes that Russia is developing a new, liquid-fuelled, heavy, silo-based ICBM. The missile is included in Russia’s arms procurement program through 2020, with a goal of deployment in 2018. Since Russia will first have to create a liquid-fuel ICBM production line, which it does not currently have, it is likely that delays will occur. Though the new heavy ICBM is widely assumed to be a replacement for the SS-18, some SS-18s are scheduled to be replaced by the silo-based RS-24, the experts say.

They found out that Russia is adjusting the operations of its mobile ICBMs, with each battalion spending longer periods deployed away from its garrison. A Russian television crew accompanying the 54th Guards Missile Division at Teykovo on a combat patrol in July 2012, for example, reported that “the time the missile troops remain on combat patrol routes has gone up considerably. From now on, the military have to remain in position at secret locations in the woods for 20 days in a row”.

The mobile missile units are also being equipped with a new “modernized engineering support and camouflaging vehicle (MIOM-M)” designed to improve the ability of the missile launchers to remain undetected during alert deployments. This includes providing “concealment and imitation of a missile system in field positions, distortion of tracks of system units immediately after they have been taken [sic], including the rolling on of tracks leading to false positions and objects”.

Five ICBMs were test-launched in 2012, and an SRF spokesperson said 11 ICBM launches were scheduled for 2013.

New class submarines

The paper points out that after more than 15 years of design, development, and production, the first of the new Borei-class (or Borey) ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs) entered into service on January 13, 2013. Twenty-five years have passed since the last SSBN was commissioned in Russia. The new SSBN begins the transition from Soviet-era missile submarine designs to a new SSBN class of eight planned boats scheduled to replace the current Delta III and Delta IV models by the early 2020s; the first boat is named Yuri Dolgoruki. The current SSBN fleet consists of 10 boats: one Borei, six Delta IVs, and three Delta IIIs. Combined they carry 160 submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) with up to 624 warheads.

The Russian navy declared in 2012 that continuous SSBN deterrent patrols would resume by midyear. But according to information obtained by the authors of the paper from the US Navy under the Freedom of Information Act, Russian SSBNs only conducted four to six patrols during all of 2012. “The duration of Russian SSBN patrols is not known but is



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assumed to be considerably shorter than US SSBN patrols, each of which lasts an average of about 70 days. With only five to six operational SSBNs in 2012, the number of Russian patrols may have been insufficient to maintain continuous patrols," says the paper,

<http://www.eurasiareview.com/08052013-russia-bidding-farewell-to-soviet-nukes-analysis/>

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